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E. A. Van Vleck.

THE

CHILDREN'S WEEK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

'THE MORALS OF PLEASURE,' AND 'THE YOUNG EMIGRANTS.'

By Mrs. Susan Ann Livingston (Ridley) Sedgwick.

A social circle emulous to please.

ROGERS.

BOSTON,

PUBLISHED BY CARTER AND HENDEE.

BALTIMORE, CHARLES CARTER.

1830.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO WIT.

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JNO. W DAVIS,
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TO

ELLEN MURRAY,

THE DAUGHTER OF ONE OF MY EARLIEST FRIENDS,

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

199844

THE CHILDREN'S WEEK.

CHAPTER I.

The actors are at hand, and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.

Shakspeare.

But we must crave your patience, young friends, for a few moments.—We cannot permit our 'troupe,' to rush upon the stage without the proper scenic decorations, and in the adjustment of these, your fancy must cooperate with ours, or the labor will be lost.—Imagine then a fine old mansion. Place it at the northern side of a lawn, consisting of at least twelve acres, and shelter it from the rude breath of Boreas by a beautiful wood of chesnuts, walnuts, and oaks. On the eastern side, that it may catch the first rays of the morning, spread a flower garden;—and on the west, through a screen of young evergreens, may be partially discerned the offices, befitting a country gentleman's establishment. The lawn, which should slope gradually, till it is bounded by a row of trees, so placed, as to intercept

the common view, (this being a line of exclusion which even in our republican country is permitted,) must be dotted with clumps of locusts; and here and there a fine horse-chesnut,—the growth of forty years or more,—should present its dense foliage and regular outline.—Now, over all, you must assist us to shed the soft starry light of a moonless night in midsummer. The evening though warm, is not sultry. There is a gentle breathing over beds of violets, and through labyrinths of honey-suckle; and a gush of sweetness ever and anon, betrays where Zephyr has been wandering.—But the little domain though tranquil, is not solitary. A brighter light would disclose a pathway that winds around on the eastern side, to the dwelling of a neighboring farmer; the postman's horn is just announcing the arrival of the stage-coach at the village of D——, scarce more than a mile off;—and the vapor which seems to hang just over the trees in the south, is probably a smoke-wreath escaped from New York,—about ten miles distant.

At this moment we are attracted by voices, to the long piazza which occupies the front of the house, where are assembled the family of Mr Philips.—Elevated above the rest, may be caught the accents of his youngest daughter Matilda, or as she is familiarly called, 'Matty,' a child of eight or nine years old; who exclaims in a tone of impatient, yet pleasurable anticipa-

tion, 'what can be the reason they do not come?—Do father look at your watch—I 'm sure the letter said half past nine o'clock.'

'And just as surely then,' replied Mr Philips, 'you have no cause of reproach, for it lacks nearly an hour of that time.'

'An hour! O dear!—but your watch is never right father—do grandmamma look at yours.'

'Mine, Matty,' said Mrs Atkinson, 'chides your impatience even more than your father's,—for I am but fifteen minutes after eight.'

Matilda had now nothing to say;—and leaning against one of the pillars, she bent her eyes towards that quarter from which the house was approached.

'Father,' said Hugh, who though nearly two years older than Matilda, was quite as little able to endure delay, 'shall we not have a letter tomorrow if they do not come.'

'I cannot promise you that,' replied his father, 'disappointments often come without the explanations that might reconcile us to them.—I have, however, no doubt that your cousins will be here at the time appointed.'

Jasper and Sarah—the one fifteen, the other about a year younger, though more reasonable were not less interested; and the whole group were in that uneasy and excited state, which is common to young expect-

ants. We shall avail ourselves of the few moments of silence that now ensued, to make the family better known.

Mr Philips, after some years of laborious application to a mercantile life, had been induced to remove to the country,—partly by early attachment, but still more by the entreaties of Mrs Atkinson, the mother of his wife; who earnestly desired the society of her daughter and grandchildren, to cheer her widowed and solitary condition. She resided on her patrimonial estate,—a farm under fine cultivation, and possessing many natural beauties. Here, with a calculation for happiness rarely made in our country, they formed one family—their interests and their enjoyments the same. Instead of the deserted old age, which from the eager pursuit of individual independence is too common among us,—where family ties are feeble restraints to the desire that every one feels 'to do for himself,'—the good lady was the object of most respectful and affectionate attention. A fine constitution, a happy temperament, an intellectual taste, had enabled her to resist the touch of time. A slight lameness gave an appearance of infirmity to her step, but with this exception, the winter of life sate most gracefully upon her. Her complexion yet retained much of its original beauty; her eye was bright, her smile sweet, her person erect, her manner commanding, yet mild and engaging.

Mrs Atkinson wisely reflecting that two mistresses in one house, would as little conduce to the harmony of the system as two suns in one heaven, had resigned to her daughter the administration of the household.

'Let me but reign in the hearts of my grandchildren,' she would say, 'and I want no other dominion.'

There indeed she was supreme—her opinion, her taste was conclusive. She was to be sure, sometimes obliged to make sacrifices to preserve the allegiance of her capricious little subjects; but it was so discreetly done, that she suffered no important encroachments. Hugh had once, it must be confessed, so far imposed on her good nature, as to conceal in her dressing room, a favorite bantam chanticleer, but as he averred that he had only done so in order that he might rise at cock-crowing, to prepare for an examination, his grandmother in consideration of such extraordinary exertions, forgave the offence. A family of kittens too, during one cold January, were, at the solicitations of Matty, reared in her bed room; and it is a fact, that the kind hearted lady rose one severe night, to throw a warm covering over mistress Puss and her young ones—an action, that no one perhaps entirely appreciated but Matty. We well remember too, finding her one day intently busied in feeding, and then brooding in her bosom, a poor little chick, that had peeped out of its

shell some six or eight days too soon for its comfort; and must have perished in the snows of an unkindly April, but that her compassion could not resist the pleadings of the children. Nor was her assistance and indulgence relied on, only in these, and similar small matters.—If lessons were to be learned,—tasks could nowhere be so easily accomplished as in 'grandmamma's room.' If themes were to be written,—that greatest of all labors to children,—she alone possessed the 'sesame,' that could unlock their brains—she alone could find subjects for every despairing scribbler, If a difficulty in morals, or a doctrine in religion, puzzled their consciences, or confounded their speculations,—she was their casuist and expositor. If a fact in history, or an allusion in poetry was to be sought or explained,—a resort to her was the final appeal.—In short, she was a complete juvenile encyclopedia.—But to return to the piazza.

Sarah, in the contemplation of the clear firmament, had raised her thoughts above the highway where shortly before they had been travelling. She was of a reflecting temper, and her mind was open to the impressions of intellect and beauty.

'What are you thinking of, Sarah?' asked her mother.

'I was thinking of the stars,' replied she—'that they seemed just as if they were looking down upon

us, and I could almost believe that they know what we are doing. Did you ever have such a thought, mother?'

'Yes, my dear, often. It is an idea too, for which there is higher authority than mine. Shakspeare, I think, calls them "eyes of light."—Imagination has always been busy with them, working them into fables and forms, till every star can tell a tale. For instance, we cannot look up at the cluster now just above us, the Corona Borealis, but the story of Theseus' valor and ingratitude, of Ariadne's love and wrongs, recurs to us.'

'And the despair of poor old Egeus too,' said Mrs Atkinson,—'I, at least, never forget him.'

'Do mother,' said Matilda, deserting her post of observation, 'tell me something about the constellations, as grandmamma used to tell Jasper and Sarah.'

'I dare not enter into comparison with your grandmother,' said Mrs Philips, 'my memory is sure to play me a trick whenever I am so presumptuous.'

'Well, grandmamma, won't you then,' urged Matty.

Mrs Atkinson, glad to cheat the time till the expected visiters should arrive, willingly complied.

'The clear frosty nights of autumn and winter,' said she, 'are most favorable to the observation of the stars, when coming forth from the blue depths of heaven, their multitude and beauty amaze and delight us However we can even in this grey light, trace some of the larger constellations.—There, immediately south

of us, his tail yet scarcely above the horizon, is the Scorpion.'

'Grandmamma,' interrupted Matilda, 'that always seemed to me a very queer name for stars.'

'I think so too, dear, but I believe we can find a whimsical sort of a reason for it.'

'A whimsical sort of a reason!' repeated Hugh, 'what sort of a reason is that, pray, grandmamma.'

'O, only a reason sufficient for a girl, to be sure,' replied Mrs Atkinson, tapping his cheek — 'so let me proceed. The sun is in this sign the last of October, and the first of November. He is then receding from us, and his influences are supposed to be connected with the diseases, which prevail in autumn. Now as the scorpion wounds in retreating, its name and figure have been fancifully applied to that cluster of stars.'

'And grandmamma, what is that large star nearly on a line with the highest one in Scorpion?'

'In what direction, dear?'

'There — west — is it not?'

'Yes — that is Spica — it is in the hand of the Virgin. The sun enters this sign about the time of harvest, and it is supposed therefore to represent a young female reaper. — But you have carried me out of my track. You must go back with me to Scorpion, and then direct your eye at about an equal height with it above the horizon, till you arrive exactly in the east—

a little further — there — try to follow my finger — now you have it I'm sure, — four stars, forming a diamond — .'

'O yes — and another a little way off.'

'Exactly right. They are in the Dolphin. The poets have many fables about this constellation. Some say that Arion, a famous musician of Lesbos, was thrown overboard by sailors, who wished to possess themselves of his wealth. But his music having previously attracted a number of Dolphins around the ship, they pressed forward, emulous of saving his life, and presented their little crooked backs, for all the world like so many saddles, upon which he could ride the waves in safety. Arion was very glad of the offer as you may suppose, more so than if the Prince of Cobourg's fifty horses had been at his service; and instantly mounting the foremost, was conveyed to a place of safety, — the rest attending to furnish relays if necessary. It is added, however, that the poor dolphin having stranded himself, could not reimbark; and that Arion ungratefully permitted him to perish on the shore; upon which the gods, more just than man, placed him among the stars.'

'That's good!' cried Hugh, — whose sympathy with the inferior orders of creation made him almost receive fable for fact, — 'that's good! — now tell us some more, grandmamma.'

'But first grandmamma,' said Matilda, 'tell me one thing — why do you call some *signs*, and some *constellations?* are they not all constellations? I know which the signs are, for I have learned them, — Aries, Taurus, and so on, — but I do not know why you call them so.'

'You are right,' replied Mrs Atkinson,— 'constellation, which means a cluster of stars, is applicable to all the groups you see, but only twelve are distinguished as signs. Perhaps they are so called because they are *signals* of the sun's progress, as he passes through them; or because they are *emblems* of the manner of his movement; as the *crab* denotes his backward course when he turns to the south; and the *goat* represents his ascent, or *climbing*, towards the north. Others again are emblematic of circumstances attending the change of seasons, — as in the instances I have already told you.'

'But grandmamma,' said Sarah, 'these cannot be applicable in all places.— To the people in the southern parts of the globe, he would appear to go back, instead of ascending, when in Capricorn.'

'You forget my dear, that the science of astronomy received its nomenclature in the northern hemisphere. Chaldea, a great part of Egypt and Arabia, countries in which the first observers of the heavenly bodies dwelt, though much more south than we are, are still north of the tropic of Cancer.'

'Yes, that is true. — There is one thing,' continued Sarah, 'that often puzzles me. I have got over the difficulty of the *apparent* motion of the sun, but why is he said to be *in* a sign, when we know that the fixed stars are so much more distant than he?'

'It is because the heavenly bodies can be subjected to the test of only one of our senses — sight; which you know requires to be corrected by the touch. When you look at the moon, does she not appear to be *in*, or *among* the stars?'

'Yes.'

'In like manner, we transfer the sun to the same plane with the stars, though they are at an infinite distance; and the language of the science, has been adapted to the apparent fact.'

'You should reflect too, Sarah,' said her father, 'though the terms by which the science is conveyed, are founded on false appearances, yet this language is so connected with all observations of the past, and all calculations for the future, that it is more easy to set our own minds right, than to correct what may be called the *madness* of astronomy, which always "reasons correctly, from false premises."— It is after all, more a matter of surprise, that such an accurate knowledge has been obtained of these distant bodies, than that errors and deceptions should have been incorporated with it. — In the words of our favorite Paley, "that an

animal confined to the surface of one of the planets, bearing a less proportion to it, than the smallest microscopic insect does to the plant it lives upon; that this little busy, inquisitive creature, should have been able to observe the whole system of worlds to which its own belongs, is wonderful."'

'Grandmamma,' said Hugh, taking advantage of a pause, 'have n't you some more fables to tell us?'

'A few, perhaps — but I'm afraid my stock will soon be spent. I wish for your sake, that I could sweep the heavens more skilfully.'

'Sweep the heavens,' repeated Matty, 'now what does that mean?

'Miss Caroline Herschel,' replied Mrs Atkinson, 'the sister of the great astronomer, partook of his taste and genius, and was a valuable assistant to him. When they were seated in his observatory, she would place her eye at the telescope, which, turning on a pivot, and each time with an increased elevation, would in its successive circuits, take in all the visible heavens. During this time, she would inform her brother if any thing of interest occupied the field of the instrument,— upon which he made notes at the same moment. This she called "sweeping the heavens."'

'I should like such sweeping!' cried Matty. 'But now grandmamma go on, and I will not interrupt you again.'

'Direct your eye then northwest from the Dolphin, till it meets a very large star surrounded by several smaller ones—have you found it?'

'Yes.'

'That is in Lyra; and this you must know is said to be the very lyre with which Orpheus so softened the infernal deities, that they gave him back his wife again. You remember I told you the story the other day, when you asked me the meaning of the line

"His numbers rais'd a shade from hell."'

'Yes, yes,' cried Matty and Hugh, 'we remember that, very well.'

'Now pass the northern crown,' continued Mrs Atkinson, 'I believe you all know that—and descending a little south, you will see the star Arcturus, in Böotes; who is supposed to be Arcas, the son of the nymph Calisto. He was a great huntsman,—a taste he probably inherited from his mother, who was one of Diana's attendants. But like those of some other young gentlemen, his sport had nearly proved death to others; for poor Calisto, having been changed into a bear, he was on one occasion near killing his own mother; so to get her out of harm's way, Jupiter transferred her to the skies, under the form of the Ursa major, or great bear; and when Arcas died, he had a similar promotion under the constellation of Böotes. He is represented with a

club in one hand, and with the other holding two dogs in a leash, who are barking at Calisto.'

Here Mrs Atkinson was interrupted by a general start from the children, whose senses quickened by expectation, had caught the sound of approaching wheels.

'I hear the first gate open,' exclaimed Matty, 'they 've come ! they 've come !'

'Yes, that must be the carriage,' cried Jasper, 'let 's run and meet it'—and followed by Hugh, he was soon out of sight. Sarah was too happy for speech, Matty jumped and laughed with joy,—and Arcas was left to drive the bear around the pole without further observation.

It was not many minutes before a carriage issued from the long avenue by which the house was approached, and Jasper reaching the piazza at the same instant, eagerly opened the door to receive his cousins, Richard and Helen Lee. They were about the ages of Jasper and Sarah,—the children of a daughter of Mrs Atkinson, residing in New Jersey. Their accustomed visits to their grandmother had latterly been interfered with, by the increasing demands of their education ; but the present vacation was in part to be passed with her,—and it had, therefore, been looked forward to with the greater interest.

For some moments the joy of all parties was manifested by the usual noisy demonstrations. Having at

length assumed the quiet tone of decided satisfaction, the visiters were in a proper frame of mind to answer the interrogatories relating to home, parents, schools, &c, &c, natural on the occasion—after which they retired to the sweet rest of youth, too profound even for visions of the morrow's enjoyment.

CHAPTER II.

Mouflar, sur le fait meme pris,
N'attendait plus que le supplice.
Florian.

The following morning as soon as breakfast was over, Sarah and Jasper produced whatever, as they believed, would most contribute to the entertainment of their guests; and Hugh and Matilda, emulating their example, were not behind-hand in the like courtesy. Jasper offered for the inspection and amusement of Richard, the usual equipments for country sports. Sarah brought out for Helen, all the variety of 'Annuals,' from the elegant foreign Souvenirs, to the tasteful little 'Youth's Keepsake,' of home manufacture; besides Portfolios, Albums, &c, &c. Matty exhibited her exquisite ring-doves; suppressing for the present, the mortifying fact, that they were likely to 'die, and leave the world no copy of their graces'—such was the unaccountable and unnatural propensity of this particular pair to destroy their own eggs. Hugh, on his part, in the zeal of his politeness, ventured to introduce into the parlor, (a forbidden indulgence,) his friend Warder, a fine young

mastiff,—in all the frolic and mischief of *puppyhood*, which we are warranted in saying, he would not have exchanged for the doves of Venus. In the midst of the excitement thus created, Mr Philips entered, and approaching the table, 'I hope, Sarah,' said he, 'that your cousin has brought you no books—unless indeed it be the "Cook's Oracle."'

Helen laughed, but Sarah blushed. She knew these words though uttered kindly, were still a reproof.

'I am ashamed to say I have not,' replied Helen, 'but the truth is, that knowing Sarah to be such a reader, I supposed she had already everything I was likely to find.'

'She certainly is "a reader,"' replied Mr Philips, smiling, 'and I am glad of it; but I wish her to be something more—I want that she should also be that old-fashioned, indispensable, comfortable thing—a good housekeeper; and I am afraid with her present tastes and habits, I shall not be gratified. I like poetry, painting, music, and still better history and science; but I must say I cannot even for these, sacrifice skill in domestic affairs. Neither are they incompatible; a girl will even accomplish more of everything, from the sense of the greater demands on her time, by the diligence and energy thus called forth. What do you say to this, Helen?'

'O, I suppose you are right uncle.'

'As some proof of it,' continued Mr Philips, 'I must tell you, as I have already told Sarah, what I observed during a visit to a friend of mine last spring. The lady of the house was indisposed. She had been for some time an invalid; but there was not the slightest appearance of neglect or confusion in the house. Her two daughters, not much older than you and Sarah, had been so trained, that young as they were, they supplied their mother's place,—alternately discharging the duties that devolved upon them. The youngest was in office at the time of my visit; and although the family was large, including several children, and some guests beside myself, there was no perturbation, no bustle. She rose early, and entered on her labors with the greatest alacrity; and gliding about with her little basket of keys on her arm,—the very personification of domestic order and quiet,—she, by a look, a word, or a touch, effected whatever she wished. At dinner she would have modestly resigned the head of the table to her elder sister, in consideration of the presence of visitors, but her father justly decided, that honor should accompany responsibility. Thus placed, no awkwardness or inattention betrayed incapacity. She carved with neatness, and attended to her guests with the most perfect propriety.—And now for the point of my story—she had read much more than most girls of her age, had made very respectable progress in her several studies, and

had considerable taste and skill in the use of her pencil. Now don't you think I have made out my case?'

Helen assented with a good humored smile, and Sarah looked the approbation she was too generous not to feel.

'I had no intention, however, my dear girls,' said Mr Philips, 'to deliver you such a discourse when I entered. I came only to advise you to walk before it becomes too warm. Sarah must show you some of my improvements, Helen. I would go with you myself, but I am obliged to be absent on business today.'

The girls prepared for their walk, and having made the tour prescribed by Mr Philips, were on their return, when Matty exclaimed, 'Sarah, there's Frederick Hammond! I wonder when he came back.—I declare if he is not turning down the other road just to avoid us. I am sure I don't see why he need be angry with us, because he and Jasper have quarrelled.'

'I don't suppose he is angry;' replied Sarah; 'perhaps he avoids us only because he feels awkwardly at meeting us.'

'Who is he?' asked Helen.

'He is the son of a gentleman who lives in the village,' replied Sarah. 'About a year ago he and Jasper went to school together. At first they were great friends, for he is a very pleasant boy; but they quarrelled about some foolish matter. Jasper thought he

had been treated ill, and I suppose Frederick thought the same. Father was very sorry for it, because he has a great respect for Mr Hammond. He tried to induce Jasper to be friends again, but he could not succeed; and then he said, as a forced reconciliation was no reconciliation at all, he would not meddle any farther with it. Frederick has been absent for some months, and I suppose has just returned, for I have not seen him before. We were sorry enough for this business, for we all liked Frederick.'

'For my part,' said Matty, 'I don't see how any one can be angry so long; I should forget what I was angry about.'

The morning passed quickly; and after a cheerful dinner, as they were seated round the table, the door opened, and a decent looking man with his hat in his hand presented himself. 'Your servant, ma'am;' said he, with an Irish accent,—'I 'm a British soldier; and you see being short of cash like, I should be greatly obliged to you for a meal of victuals.'

There was a manly, frank reliance on her hospitality, mingled with an air of respect, that pleased Mrs Philips, and she rose to give orders for his refreshment; making at the same time, the usual inquiries as to where he came from, and whither he was going.

'Why, indeed ma'am, as to that,' he replied, 'I am jist from Canada, me and two lads out there under the

trees. We 've been discharged by the king; and being that we 've all got good trades, we 're minded to see what luck we 'll get in the States. And we have n't all the world of money, ma'am, as you may know; so I made bold to stop. The boys though, out yonder, were rather backward like—but no wonder—they 're young and bashful you know—but I am fortytwo year old come next St Patrick's, and indeed I 'll never starve while I have a tongue in my head.'

Mrs Philips commended his resolution, and telling him to follow her, conducted him to the kitchen, where she directed the cook, a negro woman, to give him the remains of their late dinner, which he proposed to take out and share with his companions.

Dinah produced it, but was somewhat embarrassed how to dispose of it according to her notions of propriety, in the handkerchief which he spread out to receive it.

'I can't, missess,' said she, 'put veal, and peas, and salad, all into such a thing as that.'

'Lord love you!' said he, 'you need'nt stand about that. I 'm not *dilicate*. Did n't our regiment eat seventy of their own horses in Spain? and do you think we 'll mind a trifle the like of this?'

An eater of horse-flesh, Dinah thought, was not to be disputed on such a point; she no longer, therefore, opposed the unseemly proceeding.

'And now my honey,' said he, 'can ye not jist give us a little cider? faith, and if you will, we 'll drink your health in it—and that 's a good offer to one of your complexion.'

Dinah overawed by the good humored daring of the man, did not resent this allusion, and promptly furnished the liquor.

'That's a kind soul,' said he, 'and it 's much I admire your gentility.'—Then turning to Mrs Philips, who, amused with the scene had not yet left the room, 'indeed ma'am,' said he, 'when a poor lad 's been kilt in the wars as often as I have been, he must now and then have a drop of drink.'

'Killed!' exclaimed Dinah, understanding him literally.

With the quick sense of the ludicrous natural to his nation, he perceived her misapprehension, and proceeded with a solemn earnestness of manner, to play upon her credulity.

'Indeed, my dear, and you may say that—kilt dead! four times!—and brought to life by a galvanic battery!' Then marching off with his 'provant,' he left Dinah in the unpleasant dilemma of not knowing if she were imposed on, or not.

In about half an hour he came back, bringing the pitcher with which he had been furnished, and returning the thanks of himself and his comrades, for their

repast,—adding 'And indeed ma'am there 's nothing in life so dull as hunger. Those poor fellows yonder, a little while ago, had not breath enough among them to fill a fife;—and now—faith they 're singing away like so many nightingales!'

This circumstance, though apparently foreign to our story, is nevertheless remotely connected with some of its minor details.—In the course of the afternoon Dinah entered with a portentous face—

'Missess,' said she, 'one of master's best Marseilles vests is gone. It was on the line just after dinner; I saw it myself, and now I can't find it anywhere.'

Although it may appear beneath the dignity even of domestic annals, we cannot disguise that this loss was not deemed unimportant. The explanation which occurred to Mrs Philips, had already dimly gleamed athwart the not very quick mind of Dinah.

'I don't know what missess thinks,' said she, 'but I 'll be bound that horse-eater has got master's vest. Missess knows he said he was n't "*dilicate*," and I guess no more he is n't.'

Appearances seemed indeed to warrant the conclusion, and though Mrs Philips was sorry to think the frank hearted soldier no better than a thief, she was compelled to admit the suspicion;—which was confirmed on the return of Mr Philips, who pronounced the fellows to be undoubtedly deserters, and unworthy of

confidence. This furnished matter for grave lamentation, on the deceptions, by which benevolence was wasted and charity finally repressed; till in the midst of them Dinah again made her appearance, holding in her hand, the missing garment, reduced to a deplorable state.

'Missess was wrong,' said Dinah, conveniently forgetting her own confident assertions, 'mistress was wrong. I have found out the thief,' said she looking at Hugh, who appeared nearly as guilty as if he were himself accused; 'and who but mister Warder to be sure! There it was, hid away in my gentleman's house, and pretty work he 's made of it!'

It was indeed in an irreparable condition, and Hugh trembled for his favorite; upon whom he rightly judged displeasure would fall with double weight, from the consciousness of injustice to the poor soldier. But this was not all—Dinah had still another throw to cast at Warder, who had always been her especial annoyance. Producing, therefore, from beneath her apron, a book, which proved to be a Latin grammar, and which had disappeared, more it must be owned to the surprise, than the regret of Hugh,—'Mister Warder, I guess,' said Dinah, grinning at her own wit, 'likes grammar better than master Hugh.'

This being his peculiar property, Hugh thought he might venture to take the management of the affair into his own hands. He said, therefore, with a dignified

air, that 'he should teach Warder better;' inwardly hoping that this indefinite threat, would protect him from the full measure of punishment due to his misdeeds. Mrs Philips, however, did not let him off so easily, and declaring that he was the torment of the house, said that it was absolutely necessary he should be sent away.

Hugh begged and entreated, promised to watch and correct him, and at length it was compromised between him and his mother, that at present, his dog should be pardoned; but that for the next serious piece of roguery he committed, he should positively be banished.

Poor Hugh! he little imagined that while he was entering into this contract, with all due solemnities, he was virtually signing and sealing Warder's dismission. The unlucky pup, after shaking himself from his afternoon's nap, had engaged in a game of romps with Finnette,—Matty's handsome, saucy, Maltese cat. Puss withdrew, and he advanced; till chance befriending her, she retreated into the sanctuary of the eastern end of the piazza. This was reserved for some choice plants, for the better protection of which, a glazed partition had been placed. A door in this having been left open, admitted the fugitive. Here she kept up a running fight, now behind one flower pot, now on top of another; enticing Warder further and further within the forbidden limits. At last, in the scuffle which ensued upon her having boxed his ears, an action he

was rash enough to imitate, a beautiful Tea-rose, recently, and with some difficulty obtained, was demolished. It was not easy to say, if the flourishing of her tail, or the brandishing of his paw, had done the mischief. Finnette, however, scampered off, and when Mrs Philips unexpectedly appeared, Warder was left to bear the blame alone.

Hugh was instantly summoned.

'This exceeds all!' said his mother, who, though usually indulgent and amiable, was, we must confess, more vexed by the accident than was wise. 'This is beyond my patience!—my beautiful Tea-rose! I would not have lost it for anything!—That abominable dog! he shall not remain here another day.'

It was in vain for Hugh to allege that he had encountered Finnette in her flight, with evident marks of guilt;—circumstances were too strong against the poor pup, to allow any weight to this evidence. The matter, in short, was settled, and Warder 'done up.' Orders were given that he should be kept locked in his kennel, in a remote part of the premises, till it was convenient to send him to town; to be disposed of to the first person who did not wear Marseilles vests, study Latin, or cultivate Tea-roses. Thus closed a day which had commenced with such joyous anticipations! and poor Hugh went to bed nearly heart-broken.

CHAPTER III.

O say what is that thing called light
Which I must ne'er enjoy?
What are the blessings of the sight?
O tell your poor blind boy!

Cibber.

'I am almost sorry to interrupt you,' said Mrs Philips, entering Sarah's room the next morning—'you look so busy, and so happy—but I have an errand to Mr Howell's, and I am not in the humor for a solitary walk—which of you will accompany me?'

'I will, mother,' said Matilda, 'I love to go there; and beside that, I love to walk with you.'

'I too would like it very much,' said Sarah, 'if Helen is so disposed.'

'O never fear me,' said Helen, 'I am always as ready "to go" as Lady Lightfoot.'

'Then we 'll all go,' said Mrs Philips;—'and now the sooner we are ready the better.'

As they commenced their walk, 'I think Helen,' said her aunt, 'you will be sufficiently pleased with the family we are going to see, to pay for the trouble, were it even more than it is.'

'You cannot help liking Fanny,' exclaimed Matilda, 'every body likes her!'

'And who is Fanny?' asked Helen, 'I have not heard of her before.'

'Mother,' said Matilda, 'do you tell Helen about Fanny—you can do it best.'

'Her story is very simple, and soon told,' said Mrs Philips,—'but as it is connected with the Howell's, I must first give you some account of them. Mr Howell is an honest, industrious farmer. He has three sons, of whom two, being healthy and active, were trained to hardy occupations. William, the youngest, was from infancy slender and sickly; and partly from this cause, showed at an early age a thoughtful turn of mind, which led to an earnest desire for instruction. His parents, though uncultivated themselves, were gratified by the intelligence he evinced, and sent him to school. There he distinguished himself, and attracted the attention of persons who were able to appreciate his capacity; who assisted him by the use of books, and kindly encouraged his laudable efforts. When about thirteen years old, though his health had improved, an alarming effect had been produced on his sight by too close application. The disease increased till it terminated in a cataract on both eyes, and he was at once shut out from the light of heaven, and from what he valued even more,—the light of knowledge. His parents, in whom great expec-

tations had been excited by his uncommon progress, and who had determined to educate him liberally, though this was only to be done by much privation to themselves, were deeply afflicted. They were advised to resort to surgical aid, but this was at first necessarily delayed by the state of the eyes, and then deferred, from the incredulity common to ignorant persons,—who as often expect too little, as too much, from the use of means.'

'Well, but Fanny, mother'—said Matty, 'Fanny—you have forgotten her.'

'No indeed I have not,' replied Mrs Philips, 'I am only using the privilege of all story tellers,—telling my story in my own way. About a year after William became blind, his parents took into their family a little girl, who is Matty's heroine—Fanny Dale. She was the child of poor persons, who dying, left her destitute, and she was bound to Mrs Howell. In such a family there were not to be sure, any very nice distinctions. Still there was a feeling of inferiority on her part, which operating together with kind treatment, on a gentle and affectionate temper, rendered her not only humble and grateful, but disinterested and devoted. It is this which renders her so pleasing. The busy life of a farmer's family, notwithstanding the tenderness with which he was regarded, left no one at leisure to attend to William, but Fanny. When she had performed her appointed

duties, she would take her knitting and sit beside him, while the pity with which he inspired her, softened the tones of her naturally sweet voice to melody itself. She seemed studious to be always near him, as if to lighten the solitude of perpetual darkness. She soon learned too, to adapt herself to his nice perceptions of sound. If she walked it was with a light and careful step; in closing a door, or in moving a chair, she would be sure so to do it as not to offend his ear; and in turning her wheel, she contrived to make it absolutely musical.—She could read tolerably, and Mrs Howell, though a notable woman, willingly permitted her to employ some portion of her time in reading, for the benefit of William. At first her mistakes annoyed him; but the sweetness with which she took the rebuke, even if impatiently uttered, and the solicitude with which she endeavored to correct her faults of pronunciation, and emphasis, soon won him to a kind endurance of them. While thus ministering to his mind, her own was developed;—nor were the moral uses of this intercourse less obvious. Her gentle and self-denying attentions, while they cherished all that was good in herself, soothed his spirit, and reconciled him to his lot;—perceiving too, that he could instruct and gratify another, he lost by degrees the acute sense of his bereaved and dependent condition.

Thus seven years passed on; during which William's situation and character, rendered him an object of much

humane attention. Every one was happy to contribute to his improvement and entertainment; and Fanny, though actuated chiefly by the desire of being useful to him, was nevertheless deriving benefit from whatever tended to his advantage. Nor was his time passed only in reference to himself; he contrived to be more serviceable than you would suppose possible; and besides performing many little domestic offices, he has for some time been an assistant to the village schoolmaster—'

'Well, but mother,' said Matilda, 'you don't tell what I want—'

'I am coming to it as fast as I can, Matty,' replied Mrs Philips—'you know if Helen is not well acquainted with the parties, she cannot feel much interested in their concerns. The acquirements and amiable qualities of Fanny, naturally attracted attention in her little circle; and a thriving and respectable young man, a merchant, paid his addresses to her. Until this period, she considered herself, as having for William, no other sentiment than that of an affectionate sister; but when called thus to decide on an offer of marriage, she was convinced she could love no other person so well. Yet she had no reason to suppose that he regarded her as more than a faithful friend. The match proposed was every way eligible,—beyond what she could have expected; and her friends urged it strongly. Even William, to increase her perplexity and distress, earnestly

represented to her the advantages of the connexion. After a conflict between affection and pride,—for even in the humble heart of Fanny Dale, this universal principle found something to address itself to,—between her renunciation of William, and a marriage, which would save her from dependence, perhaps servitude—she decided to remain as she was. To quote her own simple, but expressive language, when relating the circumstance to me, "I would rather," said she, "be eyes and feet to William, than to have all that money can buy." Her reward was at hand. Like herself, happy in their rational and affectionate intercourse, the necessity of a closer tie in order to secure its continuance, had not been felt by William, till the danger of losing her was presented. But, though then fully aware of the nature of his own attachment, and of her importance to him, yet regarding it as selfish and cruel to prevent a union so much more to her advantage, he generously suppressed his own feelings. No sooner, however, had her decision left him at liberty to do so, than he avowed his affection.'

'That was indeed very generous,' said Helen, 'in both Fanny and William. I should not have expected it from persons of their condition.'

'It is not condition, my dear Helen, but moral cultivation, which makes us capable of virtuous and disinterested actions. I am afraid you will find that no class

is so elevated, as to exclude the operation of mean and unworthy motives; and it is certain there is none so low, as to be insensible of the highest, if properly addressed to it. But to return to Fanny, for I see Matty is preparing another rebuke of my digressions. You will readily believe that she had now less difficulty in making up her mind. The consent of William's parents was obtained, and their marriage would have taken place about this time, when Fanny completes her eighteenth year, but for a circumstance I shall presently explain; but which will not, probably, long postpone it.'

'Well,' said Helen, 'Fanny of course is very happy, —but I must say, that a blind lover would have no great charms for me.'

'And do you ever hope for any other?' asked Mrs Philips, smiling.

'Any other!' repeated Helen, surprised, 'any other!'—then recollecting herself—'O, I know what you mean now, aunt; blind to faults I suppose all lovers are—but—then—'

'You would not have him blind to beauties too, I suppose, Helen.'

'Why no—if I must own it, I do think, aunt, that it would be quite disagreeable to have a lover who did not know whether one had black eyes, or grey—if one were dark, or fair—danced well, or ill—or—'

'But, Helen,' said Sarah, 'perhaps he would admire

the more your knowledge and your goodness, because his mind would be entirely occupied by these, instead of your looks and your accomplishments.'

'There 's another consideration too,' said Mrs Philips, 'that, perhaps, does not occur to you. If he were insensible to the blaze of your beauty, he would be equally so to its decline; and neither age nor sickness could render you less lovely.—But what will you say, Helen, when I tell you, that were Fanny only to consult her own feelings, she would *prefer* that William should remain blind.'

'Impossible, aunt!—unless indeed she is not pretty—'

'She *is* pretty though,' replied Mrs Philips—'that is, sufficiently so to be pleasing. Her face expresses the character of her mind,—delicate, feminine, and intelligent—and without any overweening estimate of her good looks, Fanny has no solicitude on that subject.'

'What in the world then, is the reason of such a strange preference?' asked Helen.

'Simply that she might continue to be to him what she is at present. The care of William is so much the object of her life, that she estimates herself only by her importance to his comfort. I might almost say that she seems scarce conscious of a separate existence, and fears to be lost to herself when no longer identified with him.—But Fanny is too rational not to perceive that this is a false sentiment. It is with her but the momen-

tary excess of a mind of sensibility. She sees that it would be selfishness, not generosity, to lament his independence of her care and tenderness; and with a wiser, more virtuous feeling, rejoices for his sake, that she is to become less important to him.'

'Is there any probability then,' asked Helen, in a voice subdued by the internal comparison she had been making between herself and Fanny, 'Is there any probability that he will ever recover his sight?' 'It is this very thing that now occupies us,' replied Mrs Philips. 'The case has attracted the attention of your uncle, Dr Atkinson, who during his late studies abroad paid particular regard to the diseases of the eye. He has proffered his services to perform an operation for William, by which he feels nearly confident he can restore his sight; and I this morning received a note from him, requesting me to inform Mr Howell he would be here for that purpose, this afternoon.'

The mention of this circumstance diverted the thoughts of the girls from the lovers to the proposed operation, and Mrs Philips had hardly satisfied all their inquiries upon this subject, before they reached the dwelling of Mr Howell. He was absent, and finding his wife occupied with household cares, they directed their course to the garden, where they were told that they would see William. On entering it, a girl below the ordinary size, of a slight figure, approached them,

having in one hand a watering pot, and in the other a garden trowel. A gingham frock, an apron and vandyke as white as snow, with a 'sun-bonnet' of the simplest fashion and materials, composed her dress,—and an exclamation from Matty made her known as Fanny.

For a moment, Helen felt the romantic kind of interest, with which the account given by her aunt had inspired her but an instant before, cool down into an ordinary curiosity. But as Fanny respectfully saluted Mrs Philips, then with an affectionate familiarity returned the hearty 'good morning' of Sarah and Matty, and then though with some embarrassment went through an introduction to herself, Helen decided that take her altogether,—the smile, the blush,—her pleasant voice, and neat little figure, her appearance was entirely agreeable—an opinion confirmed by whatever she did or said.

'Are you watering your flowers at this hour of the day, Fanny?' asked Mrs Philips—'It is not so good a time as the evening.'

'I know it is not ma'am;' replied she—'I have only been watering some that have been transplanted. They are shaded, and the earth will not be hardened by it.'

'Where is William?' enquired Matilda, impatient to introduce him to Helen.

'Not far off;'—answered Fanny, 'there he is, near the altheas, weeding.'

'Weeding!' exclaimed Helen, 'can he be trusted to do that?'

'Yes indeed,' answered Fanny—'He takes all the care of the garden, except what he allows me to do for my own pleasure.'

'But how can he distinguish the weeds from other things?' asked Helen.

'He would not make a mistake as soon as I should,' said Fanny, smiling;—'indeed he often goes over what I think I have made quite clean, and gathers weeds enough to shame me.'

By this time William had caught the sound of familiar voices, and rising from a little bench on which he had been seated, he came forward, addressing each by their name.

'And where are Jasper and Hugh?' asked he. 'I have not,' he continued, using a mode of speech not uncommon to the blind, 'I have not *seen* them for some time.'

Mrs Philips accounted for their absence, and added that she had just left some books in the house, which Jasper had sent him.

During this conversation Helen observed him attentively. The expression of his face was intelligent, mild and happy; and the neatness of his dress remarkable.

'How finely your vegetables look, William—' said Mrs Philips, 'you quite surpass us—our garden is a wilderness of weeds compared to yours.'

'You do not consider perhaps,' said he modestly, that yours is twice the size of this, and that the labor bestowed here, could not have been otherwise applied.'

'And your bees, William'—'are they as industrious as their master?'

'Much more so,' said he. 'I hope to have some fine honey for you this fall. There is one hive I call yours; and,' added he playfully, 'I have charged them on no account to neglect that, whatever be the fate of the others.'

'Thank you, thank you, William;—honey from your bees will be sweet indeed,' said Mrs Philips. 'Have you,' continued she, 'heard of a hive on a new construction, by which the injuries sustained from the miller are prevented?'

'No I have not,' replied he, 'and I must be content to be in ignorance of many improvements by which others are benefited. But I have some kind little assistants, who in good measure, I imagine, supply the place of what you alluded to.'

'Who are they William?' enquired Sarah.

'The wrens,' replied he. 'They take care of my bees for me.'

'The wrens!—how? where?'

'In the morning they go the round of the hives, which are you know open below. Here the miller enters, and deposits its egg, and this the wren discovers and removes before any mischief is done. See,' said

he, turning to the garden fence, 'see the habitations I have made to induce them to settle with me. I do not believe there is a single house without a tenant.'

The girls looked as he directed, and saw a number of neat little wren houses, perched on the posts of the fence.

Mrs Philips now delivered her brother's message, which was received with expressions of thanks and satisfaction. The girls fancied that Fanny's color varied, but William turned the conversation from himself, by proposing a view of his flowers. Of these he had quite a collection, to which every visitor had contributed something. Nor was it restricted to the common and hardy plants. He had also a number of delicate exotics, which compensated him in winter, for the absence of his summer favorites. Among these, was a fine Daphne odorata, that he had reared with great care and patience, from a slip given him by Sarah,—and which as much from that association, as its surpassing fragrance, was his especial pet. Then there was a verbena, and a jasmine,—with geraniums of every variety. It was affecting to observe, how his friends had provided for the gratification of a sense, of the perceptions of which, they had themselves so inferior a consciousness.

As they approached the hives the girls perceived the odor of mignionette, and remarked an unusual quantity, apparently sown at different times, to insure a succession of it.

'It is for the bees,' said Fanny. 'It is said to afford the finest honey, and William had a fancy to make the experiment.'

'If your bees would come to see me, William,' said Sarah, 'I would give them miginonette too, but I suppose it is too far for them.'

'Not so far as they will go, if in want of provisions,' replied he. 'Some persons have said they will go several miles, though others say not much more than one.'

'I should think it would tire them dreadfully,' said Matilda, 'to fly so far, with their little thighs so heavy laden.'

'I am afraid it often does,' replied William—'besides, for our own sakes we should supply them within a short distance; the time of such productive little laborers ought not to be wasted in looking for materials. Those who enter largely into the cultivation of bees, understand this, and are at great pains to keep them in full employ. They even transport them, hives and all, to favorable situations.'

'Indeed,' said Sarah, 'they are so irritable and suspicious, I should not think that possible.'

'O yes,' replied William, 'where there are enough to make it worth while, they are removed like wandering tribes in search of pasture. In the neighborhood of Edinburgh, there are cultivators of bees, who send them annually to the highlands; and in France a similar

practice prevails. An individual there, having a manufactory of wax, and who is reported to have had several hundred hives, was in the habit of sending them on long journies,—halting near fertile fields, in which the little workmen were let out during the day, and at night when they retired to rest, were carried to a fresh pasture.

'I have heard that in the east, too,' said Mrs Philips, 'the bees are great travellers. In lower Egypt, the inhabitants of different villages, bring their stock together; each hive is marked with the name of the owner, and they are then placed in boats, which ascend the Nile, to meet the advancing season. They proceed slowly, stopping often; and in this manner the bees, gather the sweets of upper Egypt.'

'O what a beautiful voyage!' cried Sarah, 'how I should like to go with them.'

'You might however have reason to regret it,' said her mother, 'for they require to be attended with great caution. I remember to have read of an incident said to have occurred on the coast of Asia Minor, which shows that they are rather difficult subjects to manage. A hive was overset in one of these floral expeditions, of which William has been telling you, and the little voyagers were so enraged, and so furiously attacked the seamen, that they were obliged to leap overboard, and swim to shore at the risk of being drowned.—But come, girls; though you and I might like to pass the

day here, William and Fanny have probably something better to do than attend upon us.'

William however insisted on detaining them till he had collected bouquets for each, which being done, our party resumed their walk.

An inquiry from Mr Philips at dinner turned the conversation to the visit of the morning, and the situation and acquirements of William Howell.

'I am not surprised at his knowing a good deal,' said Helen, 'because he can get that, from the books that Fanny reads to him; but I cannot imagine how he can do every thing so neatly;—I am sure I could not equal it with both my eyes.

'No, that you could not,' said her uncle, 'nor any of the rest of us probably. It is proved by instances more striking than this of William, that when blind, the remaining senses are cultivated by necessity to a degree of perfection, which we, who are under no such compulsion, can not even understand. You would be astonished at the facts recorded of blind persons, which are nevertheless well attested.'

'I should think father," said Matty, 'that they would break their necks twenty times a day.'

'There is good reason why they should not do it *twenty* times a day,' said Mr Philips, laughing,' but it is certainly wonderful that they never do so at all. It is a fact that they avoid dangers with an admirable

sagacity. When walking they perceive by the increased resistance of the atmosphere, that they approach bodies which might present hurtful obstructions. Their step is firm, and cautious; therefore less likely to be affected by small inequalities; and they observe and remember with precision, such local peculiarities as may be ascertained by touch or sound. They have been known to be the best guides at night, through roads, uncertain from their intricacy, and even when the ground was covered with snow;—of which an Englishman named John Metcalf, commonly called 'blind Jack,' was a remarkable instance.'

'Father,' said Jasper, 'I lately read somewhere of a blind sculptor.'

'Yes, there is one on record, who made a statue of king Charles 1st.'

'O,' said Helen, 'that is impossible!'

'Why no, Helen,' said Richard, 'it is but the sense of touch still—I can as well believe that, as that William can make wren-houses, and know the weeds from the flowers in his garden.'

'A more wonderful instance than that of the sculptor,' said Mrs Atkinson, 'was Dr Moyes—a native of Scotland, blind, I think from infancy, who made great attainments in natural history and chemistry, on which he lectured, and even performed his own experiments with accuracy. And what will indeed appear incredible

to you Helen, he lectured on the phenomena of light and colors; of which he had no experience, except that the rays when refracted through a prism, produced sensations more or less painful in his eye.'

'As how, grandmamma?' said Sarah.

'The red ray was the most distressing to him. He compared it to the touch of a saw. The fainter colored rays caused less pain, and the green one was decidedly agreeable. The sensation produced by it he likened to that which he felt when passing his hand over a smooth surface. This was an image by which he expressed beauty also.'

'Dr Blacklock has, I think,' said Mr Philips, 'from a combination of qualities, been more celebrated than any other of this class of persons, and gained the affections of those who knew him, as much as he excited their astonishment. He, too, was a Scotchman, born in 1721, at Annan, of humble parentage; but rendered by his misfortunes, his talents, and his virtues, an object of interest, admiration, and love. He was blind from six months old, yet has been distinguished not only as a Philosopher and Theologian, but as a Poet particularly successful in descriptions of the outward world. It has been said of him, "To posterity he will seem a fable; as to the present age he is a prodigy." So perfect, indeed, was his conception of visible objects, that it has even been supposed to have been supernaturally imparted to him.'

'Well,' said Helen, 'I have done now,—after this, nothing can surprise me.'

'Yes, Helen,' said Jasper, 'I have one more case to tell, that will astonish you even now. What do you think of a blind lady who could distinguish the colors of flowers and silk by the touch?'

'Think,' repeated Helen, 'why that I don't believe it.—I am not to be quizzed quite so easily, Mr Jasper, as you may imagine.'

'Instead of quizzing you, Helen,' said Mr Philips, 'Jasper has not by any means told you all that belongs to the wonderful case he refers to.—It is that of a lady, who lost at once, by the small-pox, her speech, her hearing, and her sight;—at what age I don't know, but I infer from the account, after she had attained to years of maturity. Her touch and smell became wonderfully perfect, and as Jasper has just told you, it is asserted that she could distinguish colors. She was also sensible of the presence of a stranger. Though thus cut off, apparently, from all communication, yet her friends contrived, by using her fingers, to converse with her, and she would very readily in this way receive their ideas. She distinguished individuals by their hands, observing with the greatest accuracy any peculiarity that marked them. Sometimes she would have recourse to measurement, spanning the wrist, or taking the length of the fingers. She wrote a fine hand, always

preserving the regularity of the lines—and Helen—mark this—if in writing, she omitted a letter, she would discover it herself, and by writing it in the usual way, above the line, with a caret beneath, would correct the omission.'

'O, uncle!' cried Helen, with an exclamation amounting almost to a scream.

'It does indeed nearly exceed belief,' replied he, 'yet the case was subjected to the scrutiny and experiments of Sir Hans Sloane, a celebrated physician; who decided that there was absolutely no imposition.'

'In most of the cases,' said Mrs Atkinson, 'where persons seem thus to triumph over the disabilities under which they are placed, there have been the greatest pains and attention bestowed on them by others. While we admire their attainments, we must render honor to the virtue that has been exercised in their behalf; and above all, adore the goodness of God, who, in appointing suffering, provides also its relief. We shall thus be led to discern the moral purposes of these dispensations, which otherwise might seem hard and incomprehensible. You see, too, by what has been done, how much may be done. There was a time when a prejudice prevailed against the capacities of the blind—'

'That was very cruel,' exclaimed Sarah.

'It was rather ignorance than cruelty,' replied Mrs Atkinson. 'Of this a somewhat striking instance occur-

red in the case of Nicholas Bacon, a descendant of that celebrated Bacon,—whom you may remember, that when still a child, queen Elizabeth used to call her "little Lord Chancellor." He lost his sight in childhood, yet nevertheless applied himself closely to study, and sought admission to the university, in one of the cities in the Netherlands, where he resided; but it was refused on account of his blindness. He obtained it at length, though with great difficulty; and afterwards put his opposers to shame, by becoming one of the most respectable lawyers of his time.'

'Perhaps,' said Helen, 'he may have gained suits for some of the very persons, who would have prevented his being educated.'

'It is not improbable,' replied Mrs Atkinson. 'This prejudice is now, however, removed. Should you, therefore, ever have a friend or relation thus afflicted, you will remember that there is encouragement for every effort, and I need hardly remind you, that your sympathy is due even to a stranger, under such circumstances. Dr Blacklock, though a man of great gentleness, expressed a sentiment on this subject, which should quicken our attentions to persons, who, whatever else they have lost, have not lost their sensibility to neglect. "The negligence, or wantonness," he says, "with which the blind are too frequently treated, is an enormity which God alone has justice to feel, or power

to punish"—Now Jasper,' continued Mrs Atkinson, 'I have extracted my moral; and as you have listened so patiently, I will detain you no longer. I perceive that you young folks have had enough of rationality for the present, and, that it may not amount to a surfeit,—I advise you now to take a dose of frolic and nonsense to qualify it.'

CHAPTER IV.

BOTTOM.—Are we all met?
QUINCE.—Pat, pat; and here is a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal.

Shakspeare.

THE next day and the succeeding one, were devoted to the entertainment of the visitors;—walks, rides, prospects, and curiosities, in turn were offered. Nor was it less an object with Mr and Mrs Philips to render their own children happy than their guests. This occasion had been anticipated as the recompense of their good conduct, and their parents were determined that they should not lose their reward.—Saturday had now arrived, and so prodigal had they all been of their ways and means, that with the exception of Richard and Jasper,—who as long as a fish would, or would not bite, had a resource,—the young people seemed not to have a single pleasure left for the next week.—Mrs Atkinson, however, knew better. A plan had occurred to her, which while it promoted their happiness, would, she thought, convey a lesson not entirely useless; and she was thinking how she should propose it so as to be

most attractive, when a lamentation from Matty furnished her an opportunity.

'O dear,' exclaimed she, 'one week is just gone, and in one more Helen must go too'—what shall we do on Monday, grandmamma?'

'I am afraid, Matty,' replied Mrs Atkinson, 'that you are in the sad case of those who pursue pleasure too eagerly;—you have used up all your enjoyments, and have now only idleness and languor left.'

'Never fear, Matty,' said Hugh, 'never fear; I 'll be bound that mother, or grandmamma will contrive some entertainment for us.'

'I think they 've done their part already,' said Sarah. 'It is a pity if we cannot find our own pleasure for one week.'

'Yes indeed;' said Mrs Atkinson, 'and if you and Helen will adopt a scheme I have in my head, in which I think Richard and Jasper may be induced to join, we will make these little spendthrifts, Hugh and Matty, who have so long been consuming the labors of others, work for their own pleasure.—And not only so, but you may all thereby be enabled to contribute to the enjoyment of others.—You will, I think, admit that we older folks have some claim on you in this way; besides, young persons should learn that they are bound to pay their proportion towards the pleasure of domestic

society,—that they, too, must sometimes be the entertainers.'

O! if some of our great schemers were only as sure of approbation and cooperation as Mrs Atkinson, how the business of improvement would go on!—Every eye was now turned to her; and Jasper and Richard opportunely tapping on the window, and holding up their fish in triumph, received a summons to enter.

'Come in, come in,' cried Sarah—'we are met in council, and we want you.'

The boys complied,—and Mrs Atkinson continued.

'The suggestion I am about to make, I owe to one of those old books which you know I love so to pore over. In an account of the first French adventurers to this new world, there is mention made of a trait of manners characteristic of that pleasing people, who know so well how to adapt themselves to circumstances, and to extract happiness from trifles. About the year 1604, the Sieur de Monts, accompanied by other gentlemen, came to America. Henry the Fourth had granted him a patent, constituting him Lieutenant General of the territory, then called "Acadie," since, Nova Scotia. De Monts afterwards returned to France, leaving Pontrincourt, Champlain and others, at Port Royal. Though they were subjected to many inconveniences and hardships, they devised an expedient by which the winter was rendered not only tolerable, but agreeable.

This was instituting among the persons belonging to the principal table, an order called "*L'ordre de bon temps.*" Each took his turn to be caterer and steward for one day, during which he wore the collar of the order, and a napkin, and carried a staff. After supper he resigned his offices and accoutrements, accompanied with the ceremony of drinking a cup of wine, to the next in succession. The advantage of this institution was, that each, anxious to be prepared for his day, failed not by previously hunting, or fishing, or purchasing game and fish of the natives, to be provided. The writer, in connexion with this fact, makes two remarks that are worthy of remembrance. One is, that these gentlemen so conciliated the Indians by their manners, that they had no difficulty in obtaining supplies,—by which we learn that courtesy is not thrown away even on savages;—and the other is, that of the persons attached to the expedition, which included a large number, only four died during this winter,—of whom it was remarked that they were "*sluggish* and *fretful.*" '

Mrs Atkinson paused, and her auditors looked for further explanation.

'Well, grandmamma?' said Hugh.

'Now why,' resumed Mrs Atkinson, 'should not *you* imitate this pleasant example? You are not, indeed, obliged to contend with inclement seasons, or to supply the common wants of nature; but you may make the

device subserve other purposes;—in short, you too, may have an institution similar to "*L'ordre de bon temps*,' by which you shall be bound to cater for each other's amusement, and at the same time pay off some of your debts to father, mother, and grandmother.'

'Yes, yes,' cried Helen and Sarah, 'I see, I see, a good thought; we are much obliged to you, grandmamma.'

Jasper and Richard, however, exchanged looks and smiles, that seemed to indicate rather a dubious state of mind on the subject. Whether they deemed themselves too old, too wise, or too happy, to require any such expedient we know not—but Mrs Atkinson probably did; for watching her opportunity, she hinted to them, that as the girls could not do without their assistance, she was sure they would be too generous to refuse it. This had the effect she intended, and having once admitted that they could participate in the plan, the boys became as eager as the rest.

'Well, grandmamma, let us understand exactly what you mean,' said Richard.

'You will observe, then,' said Mrs Atkinson, 'there being just six of you, that by commencing on Monday next, you can preside like good little saints over the six days of the week; and each in your turn will be pledged to produce something, either for the pleasure of yourselves, or the graver part of the family;—who

will have nothing to do but sit still and be entertained at your expense.'

'Yes indeed,' said Jasper, laughing, 'at our expense I fancy it will be! what the deuce can we do but make ourselves ridiculous.'

'No no,' cried Helen, 'I am not afraid of that—we will not be so easily discouraged, Jasper. But *what* are we to do, grandmamma? give us some sort of idea.'

'You may tell a story,' replied Mrs Atkinson, 'or introduce a new game;—or you may contrive something from which instruction as well as pleasure is to result;—anything, in short, which you believe will excite agreeable and amiable feelings. It will not be required that you should fill up the whole day for us in this manner—it is enough if we are assured that you will each furnish your part towards the sum of the family enjoyment.'

'I 'm sure I can't do anything,' said Matty, mournfully, 'to amuse grown up people.'

'Nor I neither,' said Hugh, in a tone equally dolorous. 'I have n't forgot last new year's day, when we undertook to make presents to father and mother and grandmamma, and I gave father an ass I had painted, because I had nothing else—how you all laughed at me.'

'That was a great shame, dear Hugh,' said Mrs

Atkinson, 'I am sure I did not laugh, for I was sorry enough for your mortification. But you must not be disheartened; I feel sure you will succeed this time.'

'Yes, but grandmamma,' said Jasper, 'one thing must be insisted on; that is, if we undertake this thing, we shall do it ourselves;—or there will be neither pleasure nor merit in it.'

'O you need not fear any interference or assistance from me; I have no idea of troubling myself any further about it, than merely to give you a good plan; if you cannot work it out yourselves, you are not worth helping. I believe though,' continued Mrs Atkinson, observing the disconsolate faces of the two youngest children, 'I believe I *must* help Hugh and Matty—just a little'—

'Well then,' said Jasper, 'only a little,—and only them: the rest of us must take our chance.'

'Now grandmamma go on, and tell us about the particulars,' said Sarah.

'First then, for the insignia of the order—you must have a collar of course.'

'By all means,' said Richard; 'and pray let it bear the inscription "*L'ordre de bon temps*"—I like the oddity of it.'

'But ought we not,' asked Sarah, 'to have something too, that seems to belong to ourselves—something appropriate to *us*?'

'Certainly,' said Mrs Atkinson, 'and this may be supplied by a star, appended to the collar, in which by the aid of your fancy and your pencils, you may place what device you please.'

'How long should the collar be?' asked Helen, not entirely indifferent perhaps to the *effect* of this new costume. 'How should it be worn? not tight around the throat, I hope'—

'About the length,' said Mrs Atkinson, 'and worn in the same manner as you would wear a chain, or riband, to which was suspended an eye-glass. It can be so managed as not to be inappropriate to either sex.'

'Then the staff—what sort of a thing should that be?'

'I have thought of something which will just suit your purpose. You know the pretty little silver-tipped reed cane that your uncle sent me when I first became lame; I thought it too slight, and put it aside—it will be just the thing for this occasion.'

'And the napkin?'

'That of course is easily procured. The only difficulty will be to get these fastidious boys, Richard and Jasper, to wear it; but I am sure it will cast a shade upon their gallantry if they refuse.'

'The boys smiled, and did not demur; but they chose not to commit themselves in the article of the napkin. Mrs Atkinson however foreseeing that there might be some difference of opinion on this point, proposed,

that being after all but an unimportant matter, it should be omitted altogether,—which was agreed to.

'How is the order of succession to be settled, grandmamma?' asked Jasper.

'By lot I suppose, will be as good a way as any—and as it is not to be supposed that guests know their fare till they are seated at the table, so each member of our little institution has the right of preserving secrecy, as to the description of pleasure he or she has provided for their friends, till the time it is presented to them.'

'Now girls,' said Jasper, 'go to work directly to prepare the star and collar, or you will never be ready for Monday.'

The girls commenced with alacrity. A blue ribbon was furnished by Mrs Atkinson, on which they embroidered the motto of the order. The star required more thought and time; but at length,—the result of their combined forces, Mrs Atkinson included,—it shone forth with golden rays, to the admiration of all. The centre of one side was reserved for the device. This was a group of laughing winged children, some supporting a basket, others holding over it a slight drapery, which concealed its contents. On the reverse was this motto,—for which they were indebted to Shakspeare.

'It is nothing—nothing in the world
'Unless you can find sport in our intents.'

The whole was compressed within a proper size, and being neatly executed, was quite ornamental.

'It is very pretty,' said Matty, 'but I don't think I understand it yet, for all the talk there 's been about it; do grandmother explain it to me.'

'That I will dear—first these winged children are emblematic of love—not saucy Cupid, but love in the purest form in which it is ever seen on earth;—as it appears in innocent and affectionate children. The basket represents gifts, or service of some description, the veil thrown over it intimates the secrecy in which you will perfect your several plans; and the motto, to prevent disappointment, forewarns your friends that they must not expect great things, but be so good as to value your efforts, for the sake of your good intention.'

'Now I understand it very well, but I like the veil the best of all—how pleasant it will be to have a secret for every day in the week!'

'I dare say!' said Mrs Atkinson, 'whether to keep or to guess. Secrets are always a spur to the pulses of such little people as you, Matty.'

'But when are father and mother to know our plans?" asked Hugh.

'This evening at tea we will unfold the mighty project,' replied his grandmamma—'but now that every thing else is arranged, suppose we settle the order in which you are to preside as contrivers of "merry disports."'

This was done; the lots were drawn, and Monday fell to Sarah;—until which time we will bid the party farewell.

CHAPTER V.

Come, quench your blushes; and present yourself
That which you are, mistress o' the feast.

The Winter's Tale.

THE plan for the coming week received the hearty concurrence of Mr and Mrs Philips. They even extended their approbation so far as to decree that it should be a domestic Saturnalia;—that all restraints should be abolished, and every furtherance granted to the projects of the young people. Hugh, in his heart wished that the statute framed thus liberally, could be so construed, as to take in the case of 'Warder *versus* Finnette.' But as his mother, though indulgent in all other respects, had remained immovable on that point, he deemed it most politic not to revive the debate—the more so, that by some secret connivance, Dennis the gardener, had on both occasions of his going to town, omitted to take Warder. Suppressing his inclinations therefore, Hugh consoled himself by frequent visits to his poor imprisoned friend, and by such attentions as could alleviate his captivity.

On Monday morning Sarah took her seat at the breakfast table, the collar falling over her fair neck, and a few rays of the star just peeping above her belt. A slight embarrassment seemed to mingle with the sense of her new and responsible character; and though with a tolerably successful air, she playfully flourished her staff of office on entering the room, she modestly laid it aside as soon as she had, in the prescribed form, asserted her honors. As soon as breakfast was over she retreated; and in a few moments, Jenny, a little servant girl, entered, charged with notes to all the family, requesting in Sarah's name, the favor of their company to tea, that afternoon. Answers of acceptance were of course returned, upon which Jenny was soon seen setting forth towards the village, but as no questions were to be asked, or restraints imposed, it was suffered to pass without remark. In like manner, when Sarah demanded a surrender of the pantry, and closet keys, they were yielded without hesitation, unaccompanied by any ill-timed inquiries. We will not ourselves be too curious. Suffice it to say, that during the whole day, Sarah was observed to hold intimate intercourse with Dinah and Jenny; that wherever she was seen, there was a careful, and even perplexed expression on her usually placid face, which excited suspicions, in spite of the well-bred silence which the family had imposed on themselves. When seated at dinner, it was

remarked that her heightened color, betrayed a nearer approach to the fire, than she was wont to make at that season; and twice she actually left the table in perturbation, as if something had been forgotten.

Mrs Philips, notwithstanding the license she had given, felt a little queerly, it must be owned, at the idea that Sarah had probably invited several guests, and that the reputation of her own housekeeping might be involved in this enterprise. She began to repent of the freedom she had permitted, and could scarcely refrain from a sly investigation as to the actual state of the preparations. To this she was the more tempted, as Jenny, acting as the agent of her young mistress, was flying about with a reckless activity, that boded no good. The frequent rattling of China and glass, set her nerves in a flutter; and once she could with difficulty suppress a scream, as the little subaltern dashed through the hall with an astral lamp in her hand.—Mrs Philips was, however, upon honor, with both her daughter and her husband, who, pleased to observe the awakened energies of Sarah, had in reply to his wife's hints at domestic loss and inconvenience, the folly of expecting too much from such a girl, &c, &c, requested that Sarah might be neither advised nor controlled—declaring that he would rather half the china, glass, and lamps in the house were destroyed, than that her well intended efforts should be repressed. Mrs Philips

was, therefore, reduced to quiet endurance. This is saying a good deal, both for her own good temper, and her regard to her husband's wishes, when we consider that she was of that uneasy generation, called careful housewives; who, from a habit of attending to the minutiæ of their department, insensibly acquire a belief that no one can do anything as well as themselves—who, sometimes, in the convenience of the present moment, overlook a principle, by which in the end a greater amount of comfort and enjoyment is obtained.

Mrs Atkinson, on the contrary, who had long since exercised this unquiet spirit, if, indeed, she had ever been possessed by it, and who could be happy even if everything was not in its proper place, provided that smiles were where they should be—enjoyed the bustle of Sarah and her operations. Her curiosity was once, it is true, a little excited by certain subterranean proceedings, and by the fact that Dennis, slily smuggled into the cellar, was apparently advancing Sarah's plans —but she had no alarms. The time, however, was at hand, when all anxiety and conjecture were to cease.

To the relief of Mrs Philips, it proved that Sarah had very discreetly invited only two families, and those their most intimate acquaintances. The little party was, therefore, of so unrestrained a character, as would admit of any explanations and apologies—these, however, were uncalled for. The refreshments appeared in the

best time and order; and Mrs Philips, as she beheld the salver groaning with cakes of various kinds, and observed the complacency with which Jenny strained every muscle in its support, was utterly at a loss to explain this unprecedented energy and capacity, without a command or direction from herself. Her usual sagacity was at fault. She forgot to take into the account, that Dinah and Jenny were acting under a new and agreeable impulse. Sarah, too, with admirable attention supplied whatever was lacking on the part of her coadjutors. If an empty cup was forgotten, or a child neglected, a timely hint to Jenny corrected the inadvertency; or if the coffee betrayed that a hasty hand had disturbed it,—she slipped out of the room to entreat that Dinah would be more careful.

The evening passed cheerfully. At the proper time, the entrance of a form of ice cream, explained the mysterious labors of Dennis; and we may be permitted to doubt, if Cheops himself, contemplated *his* pyramid, with as much satisfaction as Sarah beheld *hers*, in all its fair proportions! the most daring and solicitously attended labor of the day. It would be vain to attempt a description of her pleasure, at the encomiums passed upon it;—it was, in short, pronounced a *chef d'œuvre;* and as soon as their guests had retired, Mr Philips giving Sarah an affectionate kiss, thanked her for the gratification she had afforded him.

'I see, my daughter,' said he, 'that the expression of my wishes is not lost upon you; and that however your taste might lead you to other things, you will not neglect more ordinary objects if duty require it. From your remarkable success, too, on this occasion, I should judge that perfection in these arts will cost you little time; for you seem, either by intuition, or inheritance,' said he, turning with a smile to his wife, 'to have nearly attained it with a single effort.'

'O indeed, indeed, I cannot take all this praise,' cried Sarah, 'I never could have succeeded unless Dinah'—

'Husb, husb,' interrupted Mrs Atkinson, 'details are superfluous. We know very well that in this age of "Associations" nothing is effected without combination. All we have to do is to admire the result.'

'Pardon me, grandmamma,' said Mr Philips, 'though I like the result, I like Sarah's ingenuous disclaimer still better'—here take another kiss for that.'

Mrs Philips in the mean time, having had her own anxieties, was not without her peculiar satisfaction. In addition to the pleasure with which she observed the success of her daughter, she enjoyed also the agreeable emotion produced by the confirmation of a favorite opinion—a sentiment to which females are more subject perhaps, because their judgments are not invariably received at first with that deference to which *we* believe them entitled.

'You know, my dear,' said she to her husband, with an air a little triumphant, 'you know I have *always* said Sarah would learn these things fast enough when necessary.'

'Yes,' replied Mr Philips, good humoredly, 'I know you have, and no one is better pleased than I am to find you were right. I believe, too,' he added with a smile, and an emphasis she readily understood, 'we never differed about the matter, but as to *when* it is necessary to learn them.'

CHAPTER VI.

Jest and youthful jollity,
* * *
With mask and antique pageantry.
L'allegro.

When the family assembled on Tuesday morning, Jasper appeared as steward of the day; but having finished his breakfast, he took off the collar, at which Helen surprised, asked him what he meant.

'I mean,' replied he, that I cannot make myself a spectacle to please you girls. I will comply in other respects, but as to sporting this thing!—upon my word you must excuse me. The staff, I have no objection to,' and placing it under his arm with a knowing beau-like air, he bowed to Helen—'Your most obedient, humble servant Miss Helen, in all things—but the collar.'

'Uncle,' said she, appealing to Mr Philips, 'is that right? It is a breach of our rules—'

Then it certainly is not right,' replied he. 'Jasper should conform as well as the rest.'

'There sir,' cried she, 'you hear what uncle says—'

'Why father,' said Jasper, in a tone of remonstrance, 'I am going down to the village—'

'That indeed,' said Mr Philips, 'alters the case. We may indulge ourselves at home, and with our intimates, in little devices to promote innocent amusement; but we should avoid what might be considered affectation or a display of superior refinement. That which is harmless, even improving, if judiciously managed, may otherwise become fantastic, and absurd. Jasper is right, Helen—you must excuse the collar. I dare say he will not be the less devoted to the interests of the order, because for a while he lays aside its symbol.'

Helen assented, and the matter was amicably settled.

'And now ladies and gentlemen,' said Jasper, 'have the goodness to expect nothing from me, till the evening, when I shall consider myself your devoted.'

Though it was as vain as impertinent to conjecture in what way this was to be manifested, Helen could not entirely suppress her curiosity; and more than once during the day, broke short her song, or laid down her book, to wonder what were Jasper's intentions.

'Have you any idea, Sarah?'

'No, not the least—I heard him ask grandmamma to give him a piece of black silk, about as big as a man's hat, and to lend him her father's gold snuff box,—but what he can want of such things I am sure I can't tell.'

The tea hour arrived without any discoveries, when

to the surprise of Helen, Jasper did not appear. Half past six came—seven—eight—still no Jasper, nor signs of any thing unusual.

'I really suspect,' said she to Sarah, 'that he means to cheat us;—he has never entered very heartily into our plan. Do tell us Richard, if you know any thing of Jasper's manœuvres?'

'Not I indeed,' replied he—I have not been at all in his confidence.'

'Hush—hush,' said Sarah—'The hall door opens—and softly too, as if some one entered slyly. Do look Matty—that must be Jasper.'

Matty followed by Hugh peeped into the hall, but immediately retreated with marks of surprise and confusion.

'Mother, mother,' said the former there 's a gentleman and lady in the entry—'

'The queerest looking creatures too,' said Hugh, 'that ever I saw!'

Mrs Philips was about to ring for a servant to attend the visitors, when the parlor door opened, and two persons, corresponding to the description given by Matty and Hugh, entered. They were dressed in the style of '76;—the gentleman in a suit of purple velvet,—with an embroidered white satin vest; his hair frizzed and powdered, and confined behind in a black silk bag,—brilliant buckles in his shoes, and a sword by his side:

the lady in a rich brocade,—a lilac ground overspread with flowers as large as life, and of every hue. From the sleeve, which terminated a little below the elbow, hung immense ruffles; and the bottom was festooned so as to display a yellow quilted silk petticoat. Her hair was dressed over a cushion, and on the top of this was placed a fantastical lace cap—but to the amusement of some, and the astonishment of others, both the lady and her attendant wore black masks!

A hum of whispers circulated through the room.

'Why 'tis Jasper to be sure,' said Helen to Sarah.

'Yes, but who can the other be?' replied Sarah. The maskers having made their mute salutation to the elder members of the family, now directed their course to the girls; Hugh and Matty following them—at first with a respectful observance, then a half suppressed titter, till at length,—his mirth getting the better of his good manners,—Hugh laughed outright. Upon this the mute gentleman turning towards him with a menacing air, touched his sword, as if on the point of chastising his impertinence.

Hugh though instinctively shrinking at the hint of cold steel, speedily recovered, provoked by it to even a more unceremonious approach to the mysterious visitor.

'Just as if I didn't know you Jasper!' cried he, at the same time catching hold of the skirt of his coat.

'Begone!' exclaimed the mask, throwing himself into

a theatrical attitude, "I'll make a ghost of him that stops me."

Whether the tones of the voice,—evidently artificial, were alarming, or that the language was portentous, we cannot say; but certain it is, Hugh fell rather more into the rear—at the same time guarding against any constructions unfavorable to his courage.

'You needn't think I'm afraid of you sir, for all that,' said he. 'I *know*,' said he to Matty, who was a little doubtful,' I know it is Jasper—only he looks so big with those clothes on. I wish Warder was here; *he'd* find him out quick enough.'

Jenny had by this time discovered that something remarkable was going on in the parlor. Under pretence of snuffing the candles, she had taken a view of the strangers, and then leaving the room with her head over her shoulder, had reported her observations to Dinah, who forthwith stationed herself near the parlor door.

'I 'spose it's master Jasper,' said she to Matty, who asked her opinion,' for he made me get him a pair of master's silk stockings to-day, unbeknown to missess—but as to that woman with him, she looks just as if she had come down out of the picter up stairs.'

The unknown gentleman released from the troublesome interference of Hugh, now approached Helen and Sarah, and bowed profoundly.

'Permit me the honor,' said he, 'of introducing Miss

Biddy Bloom, who though a revolutionary heroine, as you may guess by her appearance, is still a great admirer of the young.—Miss Biddy, Miss Lee—Miss Philips, Miss Biddy.'

During this ceremony, conducted with much parade of tone and gesture, the fair unknown curtesied, fanned herself furiously, but did not speak.

'Pray did Miss Biddy lose her tongue in the revolution?' asked Helen, laughing.

'No indeed,' replied the mask—'I am assured that it wagged throughout the whole seven years with the greatest effect; and has more than once, unaided, silenced a battery;—but her profound respect for you, exceeds even her loquacity.—Be encouraged Miss Biddy'—he continued in a tender tone, 'believe me you have nothing to fear from either of these ladies. They are no prodigies—'

Here Helen and Sarah were much disposed to retort upon the saucy speaker, but their wit was cowed by the presence of the unknown mask.

'This,' continued the gentleman, 'is Mr Richard Lee; just perched at college—a contributor to a collegiate newspaper—writes verses and guesses enigmas—is what is called a "promising youth"—Mr Lee, Miss Biddy.'

Richard bowed, and Miss Biddy, still speechless, extended her hand—then, as if abashed at her own advance, withdrew it, and curtesied.

Matty and Hugh were endeavoring meanwhile to sift their grandmamma, who of course was supposed to be at the bottom of the mystery; but she protested so seriously her ignorance, that they could not doubt it.

The gentleman now approached Mrs Philips, and taking out his snuff-box, after tapping it lightly, offered it to her with the air of an ancient beau.

'There Jasper!' cried his mother, 'your box would betray you if we had doubted before—now have done with your foolery, and tell us who it is you have brought here.'

"'O curiosity! thy name is woman,'" cried Jasper, removing his mask, and resuming his natural voice; 'even my respectable mother cannot resist thee.—But,' said he gravely, and with an air of entreaty, 'will you promise me, if I inform you, that you will forgive me?'

'Forgive you! nonsense—there's nothing to forgive.'

'Indeed—indeed you must give me your word—there is more in this than you think.'

Mrs Philips, struck with the tone in which this was uttered, and naturally apprehensive, became uneasy. The idea immediately presented itself, that Jasper having done something wrong, was taking this way to evade her displeasure.—

'Jasper,' said she, 'don't trifle with me—tell me at once what this means—'

'Well,' said he, with a look not intended to allay her

anxiety, 'well, if I must,—I must;' and leading the lady up to his mother, whose countenance exhibited an odd contrast to the absurd figures before her, he at the same moment removed the mask, and revealed Frederick Hammond!

This unexpected disclosure produced a burst of pleasure. Mr. Philips advancing to Frederick, gave him a hearty welcome; and Mrs Philips, while she rebuked Jasper's roguery, acknowledged that she was much more than compensated for any fears he had mischievously inspired.

Enquiries now poured forth from all sides.

'Where did you get your fine clothes, Jasper?' said Matty.

'Your bag too?' said Helen.'

'And your sword Jasper?' said Hugh—'I should like to know where you got that.'

'Mrs Hammond furnished us with every thing,' replied he. You know she has a quantity of old fashioned gear that belonged to her father and mother—but oh the sport we had in dressing! It almost killed me.'

'What put it in your heads to disguise yourselves?' asked Sarah, aside to Jasper.

'O just to break up the stiffness of the business,' said he—'You may suppose Frederick felt a little queer as well as myself, and we thought the best way was to work it into a joke.'

Frederick and Jasper had now to undergo a thorough examination. They were turned about and about; and Mrs Atkinson as much amused as the young folks, lived over again the splendid times of her youth, calling up the long forgotten images of padusoys, ducapes, negligés, hoops, &c, &c,—till Frederick begged to retire a moment, that he might disrobe. Having rejoined the circle in his proper shape, disencumbered in mind as well as body, he was able to parry the jokes which assailed Miss Biddy from all quarters; and to contribute his share to the merriment of the evening.

What can more certainly insure happiness than the conquest over angry feelings,—the sacrifice of pride,—the reconciliation of friends,—the approbation of those we love! If the spirits of our young readers ever want a cordial, let them try some portion of this prescription.

CHAPTER VII.

Nor some reproof yourself refuse
From your aggriev'd bow-wow.
Cowper.

The family were seated at table on Wednesday morning, when Mrs Philips in surprise enquired 'where 's Hugh ?'

She had scarcely spoken when the door slowly opened, and with an awkward step, and a countenance in which bashfulness and satisfaction were ludicrously mingled, he appeared, holding the door, as if wanting resolution to enter.

'Come Hugh, come in,' cried Jasper—'why man, you look more like a sheep than a boy.'

This address not increasing his confidence, he was about to take to his heels, when his father said in an encouraging tone, 'come Hugh, wear your honors like one who is able to sustain them.'

'Here Hugh,' said Richard, making room for him, here is a seat by me ; I cannot eat my breakfast if you don't come.'

This action, and the good-natured look that accompanied it, reassured Hugh, and he approached the table;—but Jasper could not refrain from another hit.

'Hold up your staff my boy;—don't wear it between your legs, as Ben Bashful did his sword.'

Hugh had now however fairly made his entrée, and obeying Jasper's directions, did indeed raise his staff with a threatening gesture, which showed him both willing and able to use it manfully. But perceiving by his mother's countenance that the time and place were unfitting, he quietly seated himself.

'And what Hugh are we to expect from you to-day?' asked Mr Philips.

'Nothing till after dinner, father,' said he. 'Very well,' replied Mr Philips, 'we shall then have the pleasure of anticipation so much the longer.'

If there were any conjectures as to the intentions of Hugh, they were soon quieted by the occupations of the morning, and he was left to mature his plans without question or molestation.—Once indeed he was arrested when proceeding in 'double quick time' to his grandmother's room, by an enquiry from his father, with which he would have willingly dispensed.

'Hugh, my son, has Berrian been to mend the garden gate?'

'No sir,' said Hugh—then adding in some confusion, 'I forgot to carry your message to him.'

'I am sorry for that Hugh; you must then go immediately. I cannot suffer the garden to be exposed.'

Hugh looked disconcerted. 'Is it very necessary father? must I go *to-day*?'

'Why no,' replied Mr Philips, reminded by Hugh's emphasis of what he had forgotten. 'I will not *to-day* interfere with any special business you may have on your hands; but as the thing must not be delayed, I will go myself. That your forgetfulness however may not go entirely unrebuked, come to the parlor, and give me your time and attention a few moments.—'

'There,' said Mr Philips, opening a book, 'read that passage aloud. It is so appropriate that I think you cannot fail to make good use of it. The object of the writer, a French author of great celebrity, is to enforce what you have often heard from me, the destructive consequences of inattention, even in small things.'

Hugh took the book and read as follows.

"I remember being once in the country a witness to the numberless minute losses, that neglectful housekeeping entails. For the want of a trumpery latch, the gate of the poultry yard was forever open; there being no means of closing it externally, it was on the swing every time a person went out; and many of the poultry were lost in consequence. One day, a fine young porker made his escape into the woods, and the whole family, gardener, cook, milk-maid, &c, presently turn-

ed out in quest of the fugitive. The gardener was the first to discover the object of pursuit, and in leaping a ditch to cut off his further escape, got a sprain that confined him to his bed for the next fortnight; the cook found the linen burnt, that she had left hung up before the fire to dry; and the milk maid, having forgotten in her haste to tie up the cattle properly in the cow-house, one of the loose cows had broken the leg of a colt that happened to be kept in the same shed. The linen burnt, and the gardener's work lost were worth full twenty crowns; and the colt as much more: so that here was a loss in a few minutes of forty crowns, purely for want of a latch, that might have cost a few *sous* at the utmost; to say nothing of the suffering of the poor man, or the anxiety and other troublesome incidents. Similar neglect was the occasion of repeated disasters of the same kind, and ultimately of the ruin of a worthy family."

Having finished, Hugh stood for a few moments in silence; then turning to his father said, 'I understand this very well father, and I do not think I shall forget it; but I would rather go to Mr Berrian's myself.'

'Why?'

'Because it is fair.'

'I have observed, my son, that "*fair*," the most expressive word in a boy's vocabulary, is seldom misapplied by you; but I should like, nevertheless, that

you would explain yourself a little further in this instance.'

'I mean, father, that as I broke the gate, you know, —and then, too, forgot to do your message,—it is fair that I should go, and not you; besides, then I 'm sure I shall not be so careless and forgetful again;—and that's fair too; because, though I have given you a great deal of trouble about it, you have been very patient and good-natured.—So I would rather go—only just let me speak to grandmamma first.'

'Well Hugh, I believe that is best—a lesson is seldom so well remembered by little chaps, as when impressed by a sense of personal inconvenience.'

Hugh upon this set off very cheerfully, and returned just in time for dinner. As soon as the cloth was removed he withdrew, nor was his absence observed till the door was thrown open, and in bounded Warder! who springing first on one, then on another, made the circuit of the table, and then crouched in the most imploring attitude at the feet of Mrs Philips. At the same time, Hugh followed, bearing in his arms a flower-pot, which he placed before his mother, containing the identical rose, that had proved such a "root of bitterness."— It was all the work of a moment, and surprise prevented explanation, till Mrs Philips perceived attached to the collar of Warder, a paper addressed to herself; which, on opening, was found to contain these lines.

'A prisoner at your feet, I seek
The favor of this gracious week;
And deem me not too bold I pray,
For every dog must have his day.
Ah! if you would but hear my case,
Compassion would those frowns efface.
It is indeed both clear and strong,
And shows a pup more wrong'd, than wrong.

'Refresh'd by sleep, with nerves new strung,
Ready for frolic, forth I sprung.
Was it a fault? ah rather say,
Girls, boys, and puppies still obey
The self-same law.—As round I frisk'd,
Too little caring what I risk'd,
Finnette I spied, with eyes just clos'd,
As if she thought, perhaps, or dos'd.
Now sometimes she so condescends,
That we are quite familiar friends;
And thinking rather long her nap,
I ventur'd just to give a tap.
But whew! a fury now she seem'd;
Her kindling eyes like lightnings gleam'd;
Deep ton'd, her rising passion shows,
And high her bristling back uprose.
Then turning round, my face she brush'd,
And quickly up the steps she rush'd.

'T would rouse a grey-beard—why not me?
Besides, if she would make so free,
I argued I might well pursue;
What 's more, I b'lieve she meant it too.
She fled, I follow'd, till alas!
The fatal bound I dar'd to pass.
And now within the smiling bower,
Sacred to every tender flower,
The artful jade, like all her sex,
Born to allure, to coax, and vex,
(For cats or ladies, power they love,
As mice and men too often prove,)
Sees with delight the deadly snare
Around me spread. Now here, now there,
She scolds and growls;—she plays and peeps;
And such a varied gambol keeps,
Till by and by a slender rose,
Alone our meeting doth oppose.
Miss Puss now throws aside the mask,
She lifts her paw—for what? you ask;
My tingling ears could tell a tale
If tongues were given, that might avail
The provocation to declare,
And show what victims puppies are!
But worse than this—ah wo! that I
In such a boxing match should try!
Suffice that in th' unequal strife,

The precious rose was reft of life ;
And buds and leaflets strew the field,
Where fate had doom'd that I should yield.
You came—Puss fled—and I was lost !
But malice still is often cross'd.
Some gentle spirit heard my sighs,
And lo ! your rose now meets your eyes ;
See ! once again it lifts its head,
Wounded and drooping, but not dead.
Now freedom give—and pardon say,
And I will guard you night and day.'

'And so I will, and so you shall,' said Mrs Philips, kindly patting Warder's head, who, as if understanding all that passed, had kept his place.

Upon this, Hugh, clapping his hands and flourishing his staff in triumph, shouted in ecstacy.—'You 're free Warder, you 're free ! and my own dog again !'

'One word more, dear Hugh,' said his mother ; 'you have given me that which is even better than pleasure, —an admonition in time to correct an impatient and hasty conclusion. I ought to have examined more carefully into the extent of the injury, before I condemned poor Warder. And even had my flower perished, which some kind friend has preserved, it was too small a loss to myself, to require so great a sacrifice on

your part—so if I forgive Warder, you must also forgive me for the pain I have inflicted on you.'

'O mother,' said Hugh, 'I am sure I never meant'—

'No dear, I dare say it was the farthest thing from your kind little heart to intend any reproach—but we will say no more about it, and consider the matter settled in the way most agreeable to all parties—now go and congratulate your dog as much as you please.'

Warder in the mean time evinced his participation in the joy of this good understanding, and so shook his tail, that if a dog's tail could be shaken off, such would inevitably have been the fate of his.

'I am glad to see,' said Mr Philips, observing him caressing Mrs Atkinson, 'that Warder is making his acknowledgements, where most due; for I suspect, Hugh, that if grandmamma had not availed herself of her reserve in your favor, you would have been sadly puzzled to indite his petition.'

'I guess I should, indeed!' cried Hugh; 'and I fancy mother's rose would have been the worse too, if grandmamma had not'—

'Stop that prating, blabbing tongue,' said Mrs Atkinson, putting her hand on his mouth; 'you destroy all the stage effect of my performances. Hugh's explanatory notes,' continued she, laughing, 'remind me of Moonshine's in the Clown's Interlude—"This lantern

is the moon—I, the man in the moon—this thornbush my thornbush, and this dog my dog." '

'Or rather,' said Mr Philips, 'of the sage precaution of Bottom, "let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is *Snug* the joiner." '

CHAPTER VIII.

E'en when we think the prize our own,
At once 'tis vanish'd, lost and gone.

Wilkie.

On Thursday morning, when Helen made her appearance in the parlour, it was observed that she wore the insignia of the order rather more ostentatiously than Sarah ;—the staff was sustained with more confidence, and she seemed to feel all the dignity with which she was invested.

'Why, Helen,' exclaimed Jasper, with unwonted gallantry, 'the staff in your hands becomes a sceptre—you look as grand as queen Bess herself.'

'Take care then, sir, how you presume,' answered she.

'Well, Helen,' said her uncle, after breakfast—'I know I must not ask questions—but we wait your orders, you see.'

'I have only to say, uncle,' replied she, 'that I hope you will be at home this evening, and that you, and aunt, and grandmamma will meet us here after tea.'

'Without fail,' said Mr Philips—'therefore, that I may be able to devote my evening to you, I shall lose no time this morning.'

The boys obtained permission to invite Frederick Hammond, and the family soon separating to their occupations, Helen retired with Sarah to their room.—There was no note of preparation, except, that when at dinner, an ink soil was remarked on the usually neat dress of Helen, a conscious smile implied that it had some connexion with the business of the evening.

As soon as the tea-things were removed, and the centre table arranged, Helen placed upon it a green silk bag, and a small box. Perceiving that attention was attracted towards them, she said, 'remember our motto. "It is nothing—nothing in the world," and I am afraid you will all think so, when you see it. I have, however, done my best.'

'That is all we can ask, dear,' said Mrs Philips. 'What is here?' continued she, approaching the table, a number of ivory alphabets—'

'O no, aunt—they are only made of card paper—a very humble imitation indeed. I have prepared them for a game, which, though I have not the merit of inventing, is not, I believe, common.'

'"A game,"' said two or three voices, 'what is it called?'

'The name of it in French,' replied Helen, 'is "*La Lotterie*"—it is guessing words from certain letters given to the players.'

'O,' said Matilda, in rather a disappointed tone, 'I have played that before.'

'And suppose you have,' said Sarah, in a gentle but reproving manner, 'you have not played it with Helen, I'm sure.'

'I hope, Matty,' said her cousin, 'when you hear the rules of the game, you will find it something new. Was your game played with counters?'

'No,' answered Matty, a little sobered by her breach of politeness.

'Well then, this is, and that 's one difference—here are some, with which grandmamma has supplied me.'

'We are all attention, Helen,' said Mr Philips, 'please to give us our lesson.'

'I must refer to my tablet for that,' said she, 'where luckily I wrote the rules when I translated them from the French. Now you shall have them in order;' and opening the tablet she read as follows.

1st. One of the players takes the direction of the Lottery, and each is director in his turn.

2d. No word shall have less than five letters in it.

3d. The Director chooses twelve letters from his alphabet, selecting such as enter into the composition of a number of words. He then thinks of five words

which can be formed of these letters. These he notes secretly, with a pencil, placing before them 1, 2, 3, 4, 0, which figures denote the lots attached to the several words, as number

1 is entitled to 18 fish, the highest prize.
2 " 12 "
3 " 8 "
4 " 6 "
0 " 0 "

The word preceded by 0 is *le lot perdant*, or even worse than a blank. It is otherwise called *le lot du nigaud*, or the *booby's lot*.'

'Booby's lot!' exclaimed Matty, 'what a queer name!'

'You will see why it is called so by and by,' said Helen—'but I must go back to my rules.'

4th. All the prizes are paid from the stock of the Director.

5th. The words must begin with different initials.

6th. The Director, having decided on his words, makes known his twelve letters; and each player being provided with an alphabet, places the same before him. The Director then gives out the initials of one of the words, and *Les Œdipes*,—that is the guessers,—endeavor to ascertain what it is,—naming whatever they think it to be.

7th. At each word thus named, if it be not the right one, the director must be paid one fish.

8th. After eight trials have been made without success, the Director withdraws the word, and begins with another. If the word thus withdrawn be a prize, or *un lot gagnant*, the advantage is the Director's of course; who must otherwise have paid the amount attached to it. But if it be *le lot du nigaud*, he must restore double to each person from whom he has received anything during the unsuccessful search for the word. If, on the contrary, the word be guessed, and prove a prize, the lucky person receives whatever has been assigned to it; but if it turn out after all his labor *le lot du nigaud*, he not only fails of a prize, but pays eight counters to the Director. The Director will perceive that for his own interest, he should never leave *le lot du nigaud* to be the last proposed.

9th. If a word be guessed at the *first* attempt, and it be a *lot gagnant*, besides the prize due to it, each player must pay the diviner a counter. But if it be *le lot du nigaud*, besides the eight counters he is obliged to pay the Director, he shall give one to each person.'

'You see now Matty, I suppose,' continued Helen, 'why it is called the booby's lot.'

'Yes, indeed, that I do,' replied she; 'I'm sure I hope that I shall keep clear of it.'

The rules having been read, and the parties seated, they requested Helen to be the Director.

She complied, and alphabets and counters being distributed to each person, she chose N. H. C. E. L. O. T. R. D. A. B. G. and announced her first word as commencing with *H.*

Herald, Heroical, Holder, Heron, Handle, Hinge, Hoard, Halberd, were unsuccessfully proposed—her word was Hegira, the second prize.

The lot was withdrawn, and her next word began with *L.*

Larch, Legion, Linear, Lingo, were offered in vain.

'Libel?' said Mr Philips.

'Right, uncle—and you 've won the highest prize.'

She next announced *O* as her initial.

Organ, Ordinal, Orange, Ocean, came in quick succession.

'—O—' said Richard, 'I can't think of a single word beginning with O—yes, I have it, Ordeal.'

'You have it indeed, Monsieur *Nigaud*,' cried Helen. 'Eight counters due the Director, and it being your first guess, please to pay one all round.'

'The deuce!' replied he, ''tis a fatal ordeal to me I think.'

By and by came Hugh's turn; but poor fellow, he had made so injudicious a selection of letters, that they admitted of few combinations, and his three highest prizes were guessed almost as soon as proposed. Hoping to get rid as quickly of the *lot du nigaud*, he put

that up, by announcing a word beginning with *P*. But here his luck changed. Letters that had refused to march under other leaders, flocked with marvellous good will to the standard of P, and the eight variations were played off, without drawing forth the losing lot.

'I am sure,' cried Hugh, in a tone of mortification, 'any body would have thought that some would guess Pistol—'

'"Pistol," was it,' cried Jasper, 'you've missed fire this time my little man.'

The game continued to circulate to the amusement of the parties, and the lookers-on, until it gave rise to a special trial of wit between Jasper and Helen. Provoked to have been baffled by him repeatedly, she was determined that this time he should not escape, and felt quite sure of success, when he gave *Z* as the initial of his first word.

'I'm sure Jasper,' said she, with a complacent air, 'even you can't find many words beginning with *Z*.'

'Perhaps not,' said he gravely.

'Zodiac?' said Helen.

Jasper cast his eye at the letters she had arranged before her, repeating Z. O. D. I. A. C.—'pardon my presumption Miss Helen,' said he, you have not spelt it right.'

'Not spelt it right? that's likely indeed!'

'Likely or not Miss Helen, it is certainly true—the word is spelt with a k.'

The point was disputed of course, but an appeal to Walker settled it in Jasper's favor.

'I shall not give up so quickly,' said Helen—'I know I have seen it spelt without the k—let us see what Johnson says.'

Johnson was also against her.

'Miss Helen I must trouble you further—pay me one,' said Jasper, holding out his hand.

'Wrong too after all—well there, take your pay. Is it Zephyr?'

'No—pay me another.'

'Zealot?

'No—pay me another — allowme to advise you too, Miss Helen, before you guess again, to look over your letters—I gave you no T.'

'Well, will Zealous then—'

'Just so—and to reward your zeal, behold *le lot du nigaud!*'

'That's too bad!' cried Helen.

In the meantime Frederick, happy to be restored to an intercourse with his young friends, had engaged Matty and Sarah in a by-play of their own. Matty had guessed and guessed, till like a little gambler she had staked and lost her last fish.

'Do Sarah,' cried she, 'find out Frederick's word for me,—all my counters are gone.'

'And your wits too, Matty,' said Richard.

'No matter for that,' said she, good humoredly, 'Sarah has enough for herself, and me too.' 'It begins with F— you say'—said Sarah—'F— F— let me see; and is a long word—why Friendship? is it not?'

Frederick laughed—'yes Matty, you are right enough, Sarah has found me out—'

'I'm sure,' said Sarah, 'it would have been a shame not to guess *that*, when *you* gave it.'

To keep up the interest of the game, Helen proposed that they should try their skill in French words. 'Or suppose,' said Mr Philips, 'that you young gentlemen should enter the lists with me in Latin—'

'No, no, father, I bar that,' answered Jasper; 'no Latin in vacation.'

Helen's proposal however was accepted, and answered her purpose. The Directorship having again come to Jasper, 'Now, said he, I must apprise you, that I have taken a liberty with the game. Instead of four prizes I have substituted one large one, and have omitted the *lot du nigaud*, inasmuch as you will all be *nigauds* if you don't guess what I give. Then instead of one word, I have three, which employs all my letters, and another besides. The three words are connected,

and I give you the initial of the first, which is *L;* my letters are E. H. N. E. E. L. J. E. L. O. L. A. L. I.

These were placed, displaced, replaced, without any satisfactory result,—and were pronounced the most refractory selection, that had been made during the whole evening,—till Mr Philips detected the meaning.

'The modesty of "*La jolie Helène,*'" said he, 'may have prevented her reading aright Jasper's well intended, if not very ingenious compliment,—but as for the rest of us, we must take refuge in our stupidity, from the charge of want of gallantry.'

This flourish of Jasper's gave a new turn to the play, which was now made a vehicle for good-humored personalities, and the evening concluded merrily.

As they were retiring for the night, 'Thank you Helen;' said Mr Philips, 'I wish all lotteries were as harmless as yours—or that the poor *nigauds* who adventure in them, would find some better use for their money.'

CHAPTER IX.

Of Heaven ask virtue, wisdom, health,
But never let thy prayer be wealth.
Cotton.

On Friday morning Richard appeared invested with the honors and responsibilities of the order. As soon as the breakfast was removed, he said he had a request to make of his grandmother.

'You are pretty sure of success with me, Richard,' said she, 'what is it?'

'That you will meet us this afternoon, in your favorite wood.'

'My dear boy, you have asked almost the only thing I cannot grant, although it is, of all others, what would give me the most pleasure—I have not been there since my unfortunate lameness.'

'But you can ride, you know, grandmamma—'

'Only to the entrance,' replied Mrs Atkinson; 'the path into it, is so rough, that I should not dare walk when I had reached it—though I cannot tell you, how much when I pass by that wood, the favorite haunt of

young days, I do long to take once more a complete girl's frolic through it — but that's all over now.'

'Well, but you will consent to ride *to* the wood, and trust to us to get you further?'

'Yes, I may safely promise that much, I believe.'

Richard having obtained his chief object, — his grandmother's consent, requested the rest of the family to accompany her. Four o'clock was the time appointed for the excursion, and till that time, he, with his aids, Jasper and Hugh, were seen passing to and fro, with looks as important as if preparing for a general emigration; and with the impetuosity common to such young lords of creation, made known their wants.

'Aunt, please to let me have two or three baskets,' said Richard.

'Mother, where can I find some pieces of carpeting?' said Jasper—'Richard is in a great hurry, mother.'

These demands were no sooner complied with, than another applicant appeared.

'Mother,' said Hugh, in a rather more reverential tone, 'Richard and Jasper sent me for some twine—won't you please to give it to me now, mother, for Jasper said he knew I'd be all day getting it.'

This was scarcely done, when out of breath, back came Jasper, and with one bound was at Sarah's door.

'Quick, quick Sarah,—let me in,' cried he. 'What in the name of wonder do you girls lock yourselves in

for, at this time of day?—Give us some green riband; quick now, that 's a good girl—and then run down into the garden, and cut me a parcel of flowers—and here—wait a minute do, till I speak—just take this basket, and get me some tea-cups and saucers, and spoons; and don't let mother or any body see, I charge you—there now, don't stand; and—stop, Sarah,' he continued, running after her, 'tell Dinah when Hugh comes back, she must give him the tea-kettle.'

The bustle of the boys in part defeated their purpose, and in spite of their laborious efforts at concealment, a general suspicion prevailed in the house, of the nature of the intended entertainment.

Four o'clock came, and Richard presented himself at the door, prepared to drive his grandmother to the place of rendezvous; while the rest of the party set off on foot, followed by Warder, who, with perceptions of the pleasure of liberty, quickened by his late confinement, bounded along, riotous with joy.

On reaching the wood, Mrs Atkinson found that instead of the usual obstacles of stones and brushwood, by which she had apprehended her further progress would be impeded, the boys had not only cleared away every obstruction, but had turned the path so as to avoid a little rocky ascent, over which the other route lay, and had so effectually removed all difficulties, that she could walk as well as on her own floor.

'My dear boys,' said she, 'you have indeed taken a great deal of trouble for me.'

'No trouble at all grandmamma,' replied Jasper, 'tis a shame we did not do it long ago.'

'But then you know Jasper,' said Hugh, 'that Richard could not have had the pleasure of contriving it,—and that I'm sure would have been a pity.'

On reaching the centre of the wood another surprise awaited Mrs Atkinson. Taking advantage of a number of saplings, which had sprung up near to each other, the boys, by bending their branches, had formed a little rustic temple. Around the limbs, thus serving the purpose of arches, they had twined cedar and other evergreens; wreaths of which, interspersed with flowers, were also hung in festoons around the sides. The floor elevated a little above the ground, was of boards covered with carpeting; and benches contrived in the same manner, were placed for all but Mrs Atkinson, for whom a more ommodious seat was prepared.

Whatever expectations had been formed, this surpassed them all; and the admiration of the party sufficiently rewarded Richard's design, and the able co-operation of Jasper and Hugh.

And now began the preparations for the refreshment, a part of the entertainment to which the boys attached quite as much importance; and in which their awkward though zealous efforts, were not a little amusing. If

ignorant and mal-adroit however, they showed as much genius in repairing their mistakes, as others would have manifested in avoiding them. When the tea-kettle was overset for want of proper support, and it was fearfully whispered that they would be obliged to go all the way to the house for another supply of water, Jasper luckily recollected a little spring as pure as the 'diamond of the desert,' within half the distance — and when it was discovered that Hugh, the forgetful fellow! had omitted to bring the fruit dishes, Richard consoled him by twisting some twigs into a form that would answer the purpose; and lining them with the leaves of the Walnut and aromatic Sassafras, contrived a substitute in character with the repast. In like manner other embarrassments, served rather to increase than mar their pleasure; and when they presented their guests with an excellent dish of tea, good bread and butter, raspberries and cream, and radishes, — the produce of Hugh's own garden — it was agreed by all, that there was no deficiency in kind, quantity, or style.

When the repast was over, and the young folks quietly grouped around her, 'you are not aware my dear children,' said Mrs Atkinson, 'of the full extent of the enjoyment you have afforded me: in addition to all the rest, your selection of this particular spot, has increased my satisfaction. There are associations connected with it, which will never cease to affect me, and as I wish to

requite your attention in some appropriate way, I am half tempted to tell you a little story relating to it. My only objection,' continued she, after a pause, 'is, that it is all about myself — '

'O that is nothing, grandmamma,' said Richard, '*you* are the heroine of the day, you know, and every thing should relate to you.'

'After that, Richard,' said Mrs Atkinson, 'I should wrong your sincerity, as much as your courtesy, were I to hesitate, and therefore I shall begin. — I have no desire on this occasion, to be sad or sentimental. As boys have not a vast deal of sympathy with such things, I shall make no unreasonable demands; and therefore, though in reverting to my childhood, and youth, such feelings would be natural, I shall not indulge them, but merely enlarge so far, as to enable you to comprehend the incident I am about to relate. Our present residence I believe you all know, was my paternal mansion. Here I was born, and here my pleasantest days have been passed. If a more distinguished situation once seemed designed for me, I have long since been satisfied, that it would not have been favorable to my virtue, and of consequence not to my happiness — rightly understood. My mother was the only child of a man of fortune, who in the final disposal of his estate, was influenced by an ill-founded prejudice he had conceived against my father. By the conditions of his will, my

mother had only a life estate in his property. On her death it was to descend with the name of her father, to her eldest son, except a certain small amount to her other children. In failure of any but female offspring, her eldest daughter was to inherit the bulk of his large estate, attended by a condition, that on her marriage, her husband should take her grandfather's name. For several years I was the only child of my parents, and a brilliant destiny appeared to await me — nor was I insensible to it. Though my parents were too wise and virtuous to encourage the feelings natural to a girl of my age and situation, there were always others ready enough to do so; and from servants, inconsiderate acquaintances, and my young companions, I received many impressions which no counsel could entirely correct. It was not the expectation of wealth, as such, that affected my mind — avarice is not the vice of the young. It was power, distinction, indulgence, — that dazzled my imagination. Happily, however, there were circumstances in my condition, which tended to moderate, if they could not overcome these feelings. My father was a scholar, a man of sense, — and what was far better, a christian; and foreseeing the dangers and temptations of my situation, had early devoted himself to my education, with a view to prepare me either to bear a disappointment, or to use my fortune worthily.'

'The first fifteen years of my life were nearly spent, when I was placed for some months at a boarding school, at a distance from home; and shortly after, my father was called by business of importance to Halifax. There he was detained contrary to his expectations, until my term of school expired; and I was on the point of returning home, when I received intelligence of the birth of a brother! — I will not disguise to you how great was the shock which this intelligence gave me. No advice or representation, had been sufficient to counteract the illusions with which the flattery of others, and the desires of my own heart, had surrounded me— nor was the rebuke of my conscience the least of my distresses. I felt that I was foolish, selfish, and ungrateful; and this consciousness completed my misery. I returned home before the conflict was over; but the sight of the little being, who had been thus interposed between me and my brightest visions, effected what my own reasonings had failed to do—it touched the spring of my natural affections, — it softened, it subdued me; and though my former feelings would indeed too often recur, I had but to look in its sweet face to be at peace.'

'The return of my father was daily looked for. We received letters announcing his arrival at Boston, and his intention to proceed thence by land, directing his carriage to meet him on a certain day, at a house about

five miles from here. The meeting with my father was now all that I dreaded. My mother engrossed with her new interests, of a temper tranquil and lovely, and not suspecting emotions, of which she was not herself capable, had not penetrated my feelings — but I knew that my father could read the depths of my soul; and I trembled lest he should detect there, a thought that had escaped my own scrutiny. I could not endure the idea of appearing weak or unworthy in his eyes, and I faithfully strove to be all that he would wish. The day appointed arrived. We knew that the domestic intelligence, so interesting, had not reached him; and as I was well assured that no consideration would make him unmindful of my concern in this event, to spare him a pang for me, I resolved to be the first to communicate it. The carriage came to the door, and I prepared to meet him. He arrived at the place appointed sooner than we expected, and not finding the conveyance, impatient of delay, he set off on foot by a nearer route. As I approached the skirts of this wood, around which the road made a circuit, I thought I perceived him at a distance through the trees. I directed the coachman to stop, and springing from the carriage, was in a few moments in his arms, not far from the very spot we now occupy.—As soon as I could speak, I exclaimed, "Papa, you have a son! — give me another blessing for such good tidings!"'

He looked at me an instant, and I fearlessly encountered his eye, for I felt that I could have exposed my heart to him.

'"I thank Heaven!" he said, tenderly, "for all its mercies, — and most especially for my noble, generous daughter!"'

'Oh!' continued Mrs Atkinson, with energy, 'no length of time can ever obliterate the impression of those few words! — They seemed to give vigor to every virtuous purpose, and to place every selfish feeling in its true deformity. From this time my character received a new direction. My little brother became my occupation and delight; and with a sentiment scarcely less than maternal, I watched over his progress. In time I was his instructer, and have ever been his confidant and friend; — and the wealth of the Indies would not have compensated me for his loss. On the death of my father, this property, which he held in his own right, became mine. My brother generously wished to enlarge my portion, but I refused; — I had enough for every rational purpose. One expression of his affection, however, I could not resist; it was the gift of this wood, which he purchased and annexed to my farm. — As the little song says, "now my story's done" — and if while acknowledging my faults, I have at the same time impressed on you an example of self-control, or proved that the purest happiness springs from the

exercise of the affections, — our little fête may have a good effect, more enduring than we at first supposed.

Mrs Atkinson ceased, and her audience expressed their thanks with much animation, — Helen especially, — who, perhaps, our young readers may have perceived, to be slightly infected with the faults, apt to beset pretty girls of fourteen; but whose heart was always open to good impressions. The time for their return home had now arrived, and the afternoon's entertainment concluded with an agreeable consciousness of mutual obligation.

CHAPTER X.

Dear madam, think me not to blame,
Invisible the fairy came.

Gay.

'Ah, good morning, my daughter,' said Mr Philips, as, casting his eye around the breakfast table, he perceived Matty — 'I did not see you before; — so *you* are to wear the cordon of honor to-day — and what are we to expect from such a little lady, I pray?'

'You shall see, father,' replied she, with a look that betokened something important, 'you shall see, but not till eight o'clock this evening.'

'This is Saturday — is it not?' said Mr Philips — 'well Matty, your week of license is almost over. I hope you will patiently bear the rein, when mother puts it on again.'

'Yes, indeed, father, that I will,' replied she, 'or I should not deserve ever to be indulged again; besides, it would be very ungenerous to mother, after she has been so good.'

'That's a just sentiment, Matty,' said Mr Philips, 'and I really believe more operative with you, my dear little daughter, than any calculations for future pleasure. But you have not yet told us what is required of us at eight o'clock—'

'I wish you, and mother,' replied she, 'to meet us in the drawing room.'

'You have forgotten grandmamma—'

'Grandmamma!' exclaimed Matty, surprised—'why father! she is one of *us*—'

'So I am, dear,' said Mrs Atkinson, in a pleased, affectionate tone—'so I am; and as long as you will let me be so, I shall not care for any other distinction.'

'Then,' said Matty, 'I want something more.'

'I dare say,' said her mother,—'well, out with it.'

'I wish,' continued Matty, 'to send to the village to ask Mr Robertson—you know he is my particular friend.'

'I have no objection,' replied Mrs Philips—'Mr Robertson is good natured enough to excuse, if he cannot enjoy your sport, whatever it may be—any one else?'

'Only Frederick Hammond,' said Matilda; 'and then as aunt and uncle Lee are to come to-day, and as uncle Atkinson said he should probably come up from town to see William Howell, and should stay the night with us, we shall have quite an agreeable party.'

'Yes,' said her mother, 'and judiciously arranged; all sufficiently interested to accept kindly your efforts for their entertainment.'

What these were to be, remained of course a profound mystery. It was only observed that grandmother's door was closed against all but Matty, — an exclusion too remarkable not to excite attention, and which would, on any other occasion, have been quite intolerable. Once or twice, too, a murmur was heard from within, as if Matty were conning her lessons. But although she was never known to neglect these in their proper season, she was not supposed to have a taste for a work so supererogatory, as devotion to study at such a time, — and the fact remained unaccounted for.

Favorable answers from their friends in the village, and the arrival of Mr and Mrs Lee, and Dr Atkinson, confirmed Matty's hopes of a 'successful evening.'

'At eight o'clock all were assembled in the place appointed, with the exception of Matty herself. — Some time elapsed, — still she did not appear. The younger part of the company began to speculate on this delay, and Mrs Atkinson too, cast an anxious look to a side door, as if expecting some one to enter from that quarter. At length it was cautiously opened, and Matty, with a smiling face, but a timid, irresolute air, entered. The collar, as usual, was suspended from her neck, but the staff seemed to have undergone a fantastic trans-

formation. Entwined with flowers, it bore on the upper end a little bag, apparently of silver net-work, which glittered as the wand fell from side to side in Matty's uncertain grasp. Reassured at length by the kind glances bent on her, and still more, perhaps, by a whisper from her grandmother, she raised it with more confidence, and advancing into the centre of the room, addressed the company in the following lines.

Lo here I am — a little thing!
And yet no common charge I bring.
List, gentle friends, while I declare
A fact you'll deem beyond compare.
You know that well I love to play,
When glows the fervent summer day,
Beneath the shade of spreading tree,
Or wheresoe'er the breezes be.
Now yester morn, my lessons done,
My custom'd rambles I 'd begun;
When on a sudden, forth there flew
A butterfly of brilliant hue.
Eager to view it nearer still,
To catch it now I tried my skill.
But all in vain — it came, it went;
Now here, now there; till almost spent
I should have yielded, had it not
Within the garden snugly got;
And on a bed of violets basking,

Seem'd to be further chase still asking.
With bonnet spread and heart elate,
I slyly crept where thus it sate ;
Then darting, deem'd I 'd caught the prize;
When to my dazzled, wond'ring eyes,
Straightway it chang'd a tiny sprite,
The which, if I could guess aright,
Should be the fairy queen herself.
Nor marvel that I knew the elf;
For grandma' often had before
Described her to me o'er and o'er.
I cannot as I would, declare,
Her garb, so delicate and rare,
Because it puzzled all my thought,
That those same wings, which late I sought,
Were now transformed, and o'er her head
A little parasol outspread !
To shade her, when in sunny hour
She dar'd to leave her fairy bower.
And as I wondered, on my ear
Fell accents wild, but sweet and clear.
' Approach not,' seem'd the voice to say,
' But listen to the fairy's lay.
And think it not some idle sport
That wins me from my elfin court ;
Or makes me thus adventurous roam,
Where mortal eyes may prying come,
I seek an embassy to send ;

You, though a child, can comprehend
Its import. — Once, such aid had I
In by-gone days, scarce deign'd to try.
But since the world has grown so wise,
We are just nothing, in its eyes.
Imagination — our domain,
Is under Reason's sober reign;
And e'en the very children now,
Are so well skill'd in "*why?*" and "*how?*"
That every spell is turn'd aside,
Because those tests must be applied.
In times of old, e'en kings implor'd
Our favors on their offspring pour'd.
But parents now are so uplifted,
They think that every child is gifted!
And all the world is so conceited,
That we with cold neglect are treated.
Still, though contemn'd, and useless grown,
We would be meddling I must own.
Some favorites yet I fain would bless,
With such poor gifts as I possess;
But these are little worth you know,
Since fairy-stock is down so low.
Go then, and ask of mortal mould,
To send me of their earthly gold.
That potent good, which more they prize,
Than all my failing realm supplies.
And if obtain'd, you then shall know

On whom the same I would bestow.'
She ceas'd, and smil'd, then quickly rung
The lily at her belt that hung,
(The same, whose tiny bells doth call
Attendance in her moon-lit hall;)
But doubtful of its feeble sound,
She cast a hurried glance around;
Then rais'd her woodbine horn, and blew
A bugle blast so shrill and true,
That forth from every flower and blade,
Her fairy train their entrance made;
When melting all to summer air,
They left me mute and gazing there.
I turn'd, my mind with thoughts replete,
And found this wand just at my feet.
These my credentials — grant the boon,
And you shall know her purpose soon.

'Bravo!' cried Mr Robertson, as she concluded, 'bravo, Matty!' accompanying the exclamation with an approving clap; — an action that gave an impulse to all the hands in the room, which now rung with plaudits. These were not, indeed, due to any extraordinary grace of recitation; — that was hardly to be expected; but were given to the diligence with which she had prepared herself, and the evident effort she had made so far to control her timidity, as not to disappoint her friends by a failure.

As soon as the acclamations ceased, 'Here, Matty,' said Mr Robertson, — who was always happy to promote the pleasures of the young, thus disproving the charges sometimes brought indiscriminately against old bachelors, — 'I for one will gladly contribute to make up a purse for the Fairy. I have not forgotten my early obligations to the race. — There is something towards paying off my debt.'

Inspired with new courage at this success, Matty now extended her wand to each in turn, and the weight of the purse bore testimony to the liberality of the contributors. While it was thus making its round, Hugh was seen to slip out of the room. We hope he will not be suspected for a moment, of a design to avoid his proportion of the fairy tax. No indeed! — it was to provide himself for that very purpose, with a certain bright half-dollar, which with singular prudence he had not permitted himself to keep about his person. This was an occasion which he thought warranted such an expenditure, and he dropped it into the purse with entire complacency, receiving at the same moment a smile of approval from Matty, which would have satisfied any scruples, if such he had felt.

'I hope,' said Mr Philips, 'that the Fairy has so far entered into the spirit of the age, as to make a rational use of the funds she is accumulating.'

'I cannot say about the use being so *very* rational, father,' replied Matty — 'but I am sure that the Fairy will give it all back again if her plan is not approved.'

'Nothing certainly can be more fair than that,' said Mr Lee. 'It would be well if we could in other cases, have the same assurance.'

Matty now approached Jasper.

'I must confess Matty,' said he, 'I have no great opinion of this fairy of yours — it is against my principles to give to vagrants — besides her story don't hold well together; I do not see how she comes to be so very poor, for I always understood that fairy gold had no end — 'T is a suspicious business,' he added, shaking his head, with the air of a substantial citizen rejecting a petition.

'Perhaps she has "failed for her expenses,"' said Richard.

'That can't be,' said Frederick, 'for by all accounts fairy housekeeping is not very expensive — dew-drops in acorn-cups — '

'With mushroom-tops for tables,' said Jasper — 'and all the world knows that the glow-worms and fire-flies light them for nothing — '

'Very well boys, very well,' said Matty, 'for all your fine talk, you 'll be sorry enough by and by if you do not give the fairy something.'

'O I suppose there 's no escape,' said Jasper, 'but really I don't know how I am to do it, unless I go begging myself — Helen can you lend me?'

I cannot indeed, for I have no more than I intend to give.'

'Well, Sarah, then,' continued Jasper — 'she is a perfect Miss Primrose — she has always money in her pocket —'

'Not because you don't try to get it out,' said Mrs Philips.

'There, I can spare you that much,' said Sarah.

'Which, as we have a running account you know,' replied Jasper, 'you may transfer to that.'

'I don't know about that Jasper,' answered Sarah, 'your running accounts run away with all my money; and the last has run so far, that I shall never overtake it — I may as well forgive you that,— but this you shall pay me.'

'You are a good girl, that 's a fact,' replied Jasper, 'and I will pay you this, or may all the fairies in fairy land pinch me as "blue as bilberries." There Matty, child, take that with proper gratitude — you little know what it costs your brother. But here Matty, listen a moment — you must not be too sharp with Richard and Frederick — boys are not apt to have any superfluous cash.'

'I am obliged to you Jasper,' said Richard, 'but luckily here is enough to save my character.'

'I was afraid at first,' said Frederick, 'that I should be compelled to pawn my pencil-case for the Fairy; but I am not quite so low as that — There, Matty.'

Having, to use the common, but inelegant phrase, 'taken up a collection,' Matty withdrew.

'I can guess,' said Mr Robertson, 'with a glance at Mrs Atkinson, to whom we are indebted for this introduction of the fairies; and glad I am to see they are not quite forgotten. It seems to me, that the children now-a-days have hardly fair play;— they surely may be reasonable and well educated, without clipping so very close the wings of Imagination, as some persons are disposed to do — but,' added he, shrugging up his shoulders, 'I am a bachelor, and of course no judge.'

'Perhaps,' said Mr Philips,' you are therefore the better judge. We parents, are apt from a sense of responsibility to be over anxious, and to urge our children to a maturity, which time and experience only can give. Besides, in education as in every thing, there is a tendency to extremes; and in guarding against the defects of our own, we are liable to run into an opposite excess. Imagination like every other faculty, is to be cultivated; not destroyed. But what says Mrs Atkinson? I have more confidence in her opinion, than my own.'

'O you may be sure of my voice,' replied Mrs Atkinson in favor of Imagination — *I* lived you know in the days when young folks read Shakspeare and Milton —'

'Surely mamma,' said Mrs Lee, 'you would not put those books into the hands of children.'

'No, I would not permit an indiscriminate perusal of such books, nor give them to mere children, for they could not be understood. But at the age of thirteen and fourteen, they might read much of them with pleasure and advantage. I may venture to say this, for I have at this moment some lines of Cowper's in my mind, that justify it. Alluding to his reading Milton, when a boy, he says,

——— 'his Paradise surpass'd
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence; I danced for joy.
I marvell'd much that at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties then had first
Engaged my wonder.'

Nor is this all — they would in after years return with greater thirst to these pure fountains of poesy, about which would linger the bright associations of their youth.'

'But do you mean to say,' inquired Mrs Lee, 'that those books were more frequently read at that age formerly than now?'

'Yes — I do — that is by girls, for it is of them only I presume to speak. And not only those books, but others, requiring as much effort, and about which there would perhaps be less question. It is true, the education of my time was sadly defective, and very limited

in its diffusion; yet I cannot admit that it deserves all the reproach it receives. If imperfect and irregular, it left something to the spirit and exercise of our own minds. With those who had access to books, (they were few I grant,) the love of reading was a passion, not to be discouraged by hard names, or goodly-sized volumes. If we had fewer books, we read them more faithfully, and valued them more highly. With what delight even at eleven years of age, I read the Iliad to my mother! and I well remember a young friend of mine, not much older, poring over the dry details of Josephus, with as much interest as if it had been a Waverly novel.'

'But grandmamma,' said Helen, 'uncle Philips objected the other day to girls reading a great deal — did you not uncle?'

'I think not Helen,' replied he, 'at least not in the sense in which you seem to have understood me. If I remember, my objection was only to such an exclusive attention to books, as led to a neglect of household arts; of these, no female, in our country at least, should be willing to be ignorant.'

'I must ask you one more question mamma,' said Mrs Lee, 'you surely allow that there is a vast improvement in the present system of education?

'Certainly, replied Mrs Atkinson, — I should be a prejudiced old woman indeed to deny that — while *my*

analysis of nature extended no further than the doctrine of the four elements, my grandchildren at the same age have studied natural philosophy, — have stored their minds with useful facts in chemistry, — and for aught that I know,' continued she, laughing, 'have found out that there are no elements at all — and this is a sample of the rest. Popular errors are exploded, science is made intelligible and attractive, every study illustrated and simplified, the most gifted minds condescend to the labor of instruction, — and these benefits are extended to all. With a judicious use of such means, it is obvious, that an education may now be obtained far superior to any that was known formerly. But from these very advantages come some evils. A diversity of studies results too often in superficial attainment; and the ease with which new books are obtained, leads to a neglect of some old ones, best calculated to improve the mind, and enrich the imagination. But it is time to cut short this sober discussion, for I see Matty peeping in at the door to remind me of my duty. She has been so good as to allow me a partnership in her evening, which I have taken advantage of, to order a little supper; that our friend Mr Robertson might be sure of something rather more satisfactory, than poetry and fairies. — Come, one and all,' added she, rising, 'for on this occasion I suppose the youngest may partake,

as the repast is almost light enough for the fairies themselves.'

'My dear Madam,' said Mr Robertson, offering his arm, 'I do admire your consideration — A supper is — is — in short it is like every thing you do — most acceptable.' When seated at the table, they were all for a time too well occupied, to observe the significant smiles and looks of Matty, directed towards a covered dish in the centre. At length, however, Mr Robertson's attention was attracted to it.

'If you please, Mrs Atkinson,' said he, 'I will inspect this dish —'

'Do so,' replied she. 'It is a sort of a pic-nic, — composed of ingredients furnished by each of us.'

Mr Robertson, having drawn it towards him, removed the cover; and disclosed the little fairy-purse, bearing a label, on which was written, 'A bridal gift for Fanny Dale.'

There was a general expression of surprise and pleasure. A few words explained to Mr and Mrs Lee the interest attached to the individual, upon which they declared it impossible, that any one should desire to avail themselves of the permission to withdraw their contribution.

'How much have we got, Matty?' said Mr Robertson, 'let us see —'

'Almost eight dollars!' she exclaimed, with animation, 'and that will get her six silver tea-spoons!'

'Now, Matty,' said Mr Robertson, 'I'll tell you what I'll do. As it is probably maliciously supposed, from my remaining a bachelor, that I have not a proper respect for matrimony, it will be prudent to take this opportunity of putting such slanders to silence. And so, Matty, I'll just add enough to buy the sugar-tongs — for though they may not want it in the honey-moon, I suspect they will afterwards.'

Words cannot express Matty's satisfaction at this concurrence in her design to honor her friend Fanny.

'And when is the gift to be presented?' asked Mr Philips.

'I would wait till the wedding,' said Matty, 'but as cousin Helen will only stay till Monday morning, and she would, I dare say, like to go with us, I meant to ask mother to let me go with it to-morrow.'

'I thought so,' said Mrs Philips, 'money I find burns in the fairy's purse, as well as in your own pocket, Matty.'

'Fanny will be so pleased, mother,' said Matty — 'I wish William could see it too, but he will see better things than this soon —'

'How interesting it will be,' exclaimed Helen, 'when he sees his parents again! and Fanny too! how I should like to be present! —'

'Only think, though,' said Sarah, 'if the operation should not succeed after all! — it would be dreadful to witness his disappointment.'

'But uncle,' said Matty earnestly, 'there is no danger of that now — is there? — why don't you speak, uncle? — O you smile — then I know there is n't —'

'Have you not heard, Matty,' said Dr Atkinson, 'that prudent physicians never commit themselves by a hasty opinion? — I promise you, however, that you shall know William's fate, good or bad, before Helen leaves you — '

'Shall we!' exclaimed the girls.

'Yes,' continued he, 'and furthermore, I invite all you young folks who have been so much interested in my patient, to go with me to-morrow, to see him — now Matty, I 've told you as much as I have any one.'

This permission was received with much satisfaction; while whispers and significant looks made known the favorable auguries deduced from it.

Thus closed the week; leaving to our young friends the pleasant reflection, that they had each, in some degree, contributed to the happiness and good humor, by which it had been distinguished.

CHAPTER XI.

——— The secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie;
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.

Scott.

Sunday morning rose most auspiciously. — 'Grandmamma,' said Matilda, as she was putting on her hat, in preparation for church, 'when are we to go to Mr Howell's? — I do long to carry Fanny her present.'

'The time appointed is after the afternoon service,' replied Mrs Atkinson,' — and now, Matty, dear, don't talk any more about it till that time comes, — and what is more, don't think about it.'

'Why surely, grandmamma, it is no harm to think of what will give pleasure to others as well as myself — besides, I can't help thinking of it. Can you, girls?'

Helen and Sarah smiled, but they did not pretend to any superior self-control.

'But you must remember, Matty,' said Mrs Atkinson, 'that time and place may render that improper,

which is in itself innocent. — Listen to me a few moments, and perhaps I can provide you with some other subjects for your thoughts, and thus show you that you *can* help thinking of this. — Have we not had a pleasant week ?'

'Yes, grandmamma, that we have!' exclaimed Matilda.

'Last Saturday,' continued Mrs Atkinson, 'we traced out to ourselves a little plan of domestic enjoyment; but how many things might have occurred to disturb it. Sickness at home, bad news from abroad, — death itself, might have turned our joy to mourning. And does it not call for thankfulness, that we have been preserved from suffering, and have also enjoyed some of the best pleasures of which our natures are susceptible, in the expression and cultivation of kind feelings ?'

'Yes, grandmamma,' said Matty. Helen and Sarah too, assented, for they understood by the direction of Mrs Atkinson's eye, that they also were included in the inquiry.

'Then gratitude to our great Preserver, should occupy some of our thoughts to-day ; — should it not?'

'To be sure, grandmamma.'

'But, my dear girls, though we have been happy, and our occupations harmless, still our imperfections have mingled with them — is not this a cause for regret ? and does it not require acknowledgment ?'

'Yes, certainly, grandmamma,' said Matilda, her face gradually assuming a thoughtful, and humble expression.

'Then too, dear,' said Mrs Atkinson, 'though not forbidden to derive pleasure from the consideration of a kind action about to be performed, we may so think of it, with such an exaltation of ourselves, that it may become less commendable. Is it not, therefore, best to endeavor to do all things, in such a manner as may render them acceptable in His sight, who is not unobservant of our smallest actions?'

'Yes, grandmother — I suppose it is —'

'Well, then — to apply this to the present case — try so to occupy your minds to-day, that your visit to Mr Howell's may do you good, as well as gratify you. Besides affording you an opportunity of giving pleasure, what you will there see may suggest important and interesting reflections; for though your uncle has not chosen to speak with certainty of his success, such I trust will be the fact. You will then behold the eyes of a fellow creature opened. — What can be more affecting? It should fill you with gratitude as well as joy; — and should bring with it still other thoughts, by leading you to reflect on that wonderful Being, who when on earth, by a touch — a word — removed such obstructions; — and even more, — who gives light to the mind, as well as to the body.'

Mrs Atkinson paused — and Matty sate for some moments in a reflecting attitude.

'Now, my dear,' resumed her grandmother, 'having helped you to subjects for meditation, which may serve to keep out thoughts less fitting, as the carriage is at the door, I will trust to your own convictions to make use of them, without further comment.'

Matty, who was an upright child, willing to perceive and to do her duty, honestly endeavored to observe her grandmamma's injunctions; nor were Helen and Sarah regardless of their participation in them.

The hour for the visit to Mr Howell's arrived. On entering the house they found the family assembled in expectation of Dr Atkinson; and that as they had suspected, there was now to be a termination of their suspense. The young people were received as friends on whose sympathy they could rely —

'I am so glad you 've come!' said Mrs Howell. 'If it is God's will that William should get his sight, I 'm sure there 's few faces he 'd be better pleased to see than yours.'

Fanny pressed a hand of each of the girls, but did not speak — while Helen remarked to Sarah how pretty she looked in her Sunday dress, and straw bonnet, — which last, in the interest that now occupied her, she had forgotten to lay aside.

A few moments were now spent in selecting a favorable position for William, and in such a management of the light, that it might not be too suddenly or strongly admitted to the organ. The manner of these little preparations sufficiently indicated the feelings of those most interested; for while every instant appeared an age, each, notwithstanding, seemed willing to defer a moment, which was to confirm or extinguish their hopes. William was apparently the most calm; but his expressive mouth, nevertheless, betrayed the contrariety of his emotions; — showing by turns an assurance of success, or the effort by which he prepared himself for disappointment.

Mrs Howell placed herself near her son on one side, while his father, on the other, with an anxious and incredulous look, watched the movements of Dr Atkinson. Every eye was fixed, — every tongue mute. The surgeon slowly and carefully proceeded. The outer bandage was removed, and the thin compress alone remained. This was cautiously displaced — the eyes opened — and William, turning to his father, extended his hand in token of recognition —

'Thank God! thank God!' exclaimed the old man — his hardy face yielding to his strong and natural emotion.

From his father, William turned to his mother. She bent forward to embrace him, and he rested his head

on her shoulder; while the look with which he regarded her, seemed to say, that though years had left their traces, she was still the original of the picture in his heart. — But soon he turned in search of another object, — and the first word he uttered was '*Fanny.*'

She had modestly retired to a remote part of the room, as if unwilling to assert her own claims at this moment. On hearing her name pronounced by William she would have advanced, but a signal from Dr Atkinson prevented her.

'William,' said he, 'you have behaved so well throughout, that I am sure you will permit me to make an experiment, to which I am much tempted. Now do me the favor to select Fanny from those three girls. I'll give you two chances, and if you don't hit right, I'll forbid the banns.'

The doctor's request had the effect he intended, of relieving a scene which was becoming more interesting than he wished.

The girls were at some distance from each other. Their height was nearly the same; — Helen was rather the tallest, — a circumstance, which together with the delicate features, and youthful countenance of Fanny, might, notwithstanding the difference of their ages, have deceived a more accurate sight.

William's eye wandered from Sarah to Helen, — from Helen to Fanny; — now resting on one, — now on the

other; and finally reverting to Helen, he paused. It was not long however, for, turning away with a perplexed and dissatisfied look, and closing his eyes, as if despairing of their assistance, he rose, and walking forward, placed his hand on one of them, saying at the same time, and with an undoubting tone, 'I *know* this is Fanny!' — He opened his eyes, and his hand did indeed rest on her shoulder; his countenance expressing at once his fondness, and his satisfaction; and the quick pulsations of their hearts were communicated to all present.

Composure being restored, and Doctor Atkinson perceiving that Matty did not well know how to introduce her own special business, prepared the way by saying, 'Fanny do you believe in Fairies?'

'No, sir,' said Fanny, with all seriousness, — surprised at the abrupt inquiry.

'You will be obliged then, I think,' continued he, 'to enlarge your creed, for Matilda has a favor for you even from their very queen.'

Matty now came forward, and placed in Fanny's lap the fairy-purse. — A conscious look told that the label had caught her eye, at the same time that in a low tone she expressed her acknowledgments.

'O you need not thank *me*,' said Matty — and she was going on to give particulars, but her uncle inter-

rupted her with a hint that it was time to take their leave.

'Only let me tell Fanny, uncle,—just so that she can understand—'

This could not be denied,—and having made the matter intelligible, and received her full return in the grateful looks of William and Fanny, she consented to go.

On their return, the scene they had just witnessed, naturally became the subject of conversation.

'Uncle,' said Helen, 'was it not wonderful that William should not be able to discover Fanny with his eyes, and yet do so without them?'

'Not so wonderful my dear, as if he had discovered her by their assistance.'

'Why, uncle!' exclaimed she, 'how can that be!'

'You have not reflected, Helen,' said he, 'or you would not be thus surprised. How should he know her by *sight* when he had never *seen* her? He had undoubtedly formed an image of her in his mind, and had to a certain extent, by measurement and description, made some approach to the truth. But though description and touch might have conveyed some impression of her stature, the height of her forehead, the curve of her brow, the length and figure of her nose, the size of her mouth,—what but sight itself could give him the expression resulting from their combination?—There

has been much discussion, as to the fact, of the power of those blind from infancy, to recognise by the eye when restored to sight, the forms of things known to them before by the touch — for instance, whether they would know a round body from a square one. There have been a very few remarkable cases, in which this has appeared to be the fact; but for the rest, such persons are incapable at first of this discrimination. They are sometimes even unable to direct their eyes properly, have no idea of distance, —supposing bodies to be in contact with their eyes; and on the most simple and familiar objects being presented to them, — a cup and saucer for instance, — cannot without submitting it to their touch, tell what it is.'

'But William has not been blind from infancy,' said Helen.

'No, — and therefore these cases, and his, are not parallel — but you must recollect, that what you expected of him, involved yet greater difficulties, than the apprehension of mere forms.'

'I was not surprised at any thing,' said Richard, 'but at the certainty with which William directed his course to Fanny — there was no touch in that — and why too, if he could do so with his eyes shut, could he not do it with them open?'

'I suppose,' said his uncle, 'you would choose to consider it a beautiful instance of a lover's instinct —'

'Yes, I think I should,' replied Richard, 'but I am afraid that you will give it what uncle Philips calls, a "common sense explanation."'

'I shall certainly try to do so,' said Doctor Atkinson. 'Let me see — In the first place you must consider the confusion produced by the sight of external objects, after long disuse of the organ; and that while thus perplexed, other avenues of perception, would be comparatively closed. But as soon as he shuts his eyes, his mind returns to its usual modes of operation. His ear recovers its acuteness, and detects sounds so slight as to escape us altogether. A single movement of her foot, the rustling of her garments, her very breathing, have to him a peculiar character, and may serve to indicate the spot she occupies. Besides, Fanny may have had a flower in her bosom — that, Richard, would solve the whole; and by the by, furnish as sentimental an explanation as your own, — a lover attracted by odors to his mistress. It may have been a rose, — the "maiden-blush," for instance, which you know signifies in the mystical language of flowers, "If you love me, you will find me out—"'

'Ah, uncle,' cried Richard, 'that is coming round to my solution after all, — the lover's instinct.' To this, however, his uncle demurred; and it was finally agreed that each should retain the opinion most agreeable to himself.

In the evening, one after another, the younger part of the circle gathered round Mrs Atkinson.

'Grandmamma,' said Helen, 'we have had a delightful visit — the last week especially, has absolutely flown, and for that you know we are indebted to you.'

'And mother, and father too,' said Matty, who was always for a fair distribution of thanks. 'If they had not given consent, we could not have had half so much pleasure, I 'm sure.'

'That is well remembered, dear Matty,' said her grandmother,' and for that I owe them as much as you do. But now that the pleasure is over it is not I hope, to be succeeded by listlessness and vain regrets. Those are the fruits of immoderate and enervating indulgence; rational and innocent enjoyments perpetuate themselves by pleasant remembrances. As they afford too, a healthful stimulus, you will all I am sure, return to your studies with increased diligence. I do not presume to give such superfluous counsel to young gentlemen like Richard and Jasper, in whose ears I dare say Latin and Greek are at this moment ringing a "concord of sweet sounds" — but to the rest, I may venture I suppose a gentle hint at their duty.'

'For my part, grandmamma,' said Helen, 'I feel a greater desire for improvement than I ever felt before, and for a reason which I dare say you would not guess.'

'And what is that, Helen?' said Mrs Atkinson.

'I know,' said Helen, in a tone of some embarrassment,' 'I know it is not polite to speak of a person's age — but you are so good, grandmamma, that you will excuse it. What I was going to say is, that when I see a person so agreeable at your age as you are, I know it can only be because they were industrious in their youth — I have sometimes had a desire to be accomplished as a young lady, but I think I shall now care much more, to be so when an old one.'

'You will be obliged to try pretty hard, I can tell you, Helen,' said Hugh, whose blunt honesty was always uppermost; 'to be such an old lady as grandmamma, for you must be good too, and that is a deal harder, than to be agreeable.'

'Yes, Hugh,' replied Helen, 'that is very true, and I have had many thoughts about that too, that I never had before, for which I hope to be the better, though I own I have no expectations of ever equalling grandmamma.'

'Besides, Hugh,' said Sarah, 'we should always choose the best models, as our drawing master says, even if we can't equal them.'

'Thanks and blessings for your love, my dear children!' said Mrs Atkinson; 'my head is too old to be turned by compliments, or yours would be fatal to me.'

But precious as your affection is, I cannot wish that it should obscure your judgments. As you advance yourselves, your standard will become higher and higher; and you will hereafter look back with a smile, at your exaggerated estimate of "grandmamma." When that time comes, all I ask of you, is, that you will nevertheless continue to love me as well, as I am willing to believe you have, during this happy *Children's Week*.'